

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

MUSKOGEE RPO AND WESTERN REGION EDUCATION SERVICE UNITS

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PREFACE

The *WAVES Handbook* (Western Association of Veteran Education Specialists) supplements the AACRAO Manual (American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers). The *WAVES Handbook* is written for colleges and universities; in VA parlance, for institutions of higher learning (IHLs). Apprenticeship, flight schools, correspondence schools, and nondegree vocational schools are not covered in this Handbook.

The *WAVES Handbook* is on the Internet at the GI Bill Web Site (<http://www.gibill.va.gov/>). From the menu in the left frame, select School Officials. The *WAVES Handbook* can be downloaded as a WORD document or as a PDF document. The current (Revised October 1998) AACRAO manual is also available on the same page.

The Handbook's revision date is on the bottom of this page and a chronological revision list is on page iv. Periodically check Handbook on the Internet. If we revised the Handbook, download and replace the Handbook on your PC. If you keep a printed copy, print and replace the revised pages and you're up-to-date (print duplex and print page ranges starting with an odd numbered page and ending with an even numbered page).

If you have suggestions or if you find an error, report the suggestion or error to your Education Liaison Representative (ELR) or e-mail the suggestion or error to 348bcrai@vba.va.gov.

If you have questions about VA policies and procedures or about completing VA forms, contact your ELR. If you have questions about program approval, contact your State Approving Agency (SAA). There's a list of ELRs and SAAs starting on page { PAGEREF _Ref453641846 }. If you have questions about a veteran's benefit status, call one of the numbers listed below.

TOLL FREE EDUCATION NUMBER FOR MUSKOGEE REGIONAL PROCESSING OFFICE (RPO)

1-888-442-4551

NON-TOLL FREE NUMBER FOR CERTIFYING OFFICIALS ONLY

918-687-2113

**REVISED
June 26, 2001**

REVISIONS

DATE	CHANGE	PAGE	DUPLEX PAGES AFFECTED
All year	Corrected the computer's grammar and syntax.		
07/24/00	Revised the thumbnail descriptions of chapters 30 and 35 (pages 7-8). Caparison of Education Programs revised (Pages 10-11). Added "Change of Address and Direct Deposit" (page 12) and "Tuition and Fees" (page 13). Revised Mitigating Circumstances and 6-Credit Hour Exclusion (32). Supplemental and Concurrent Enrollments (37-39) is revised, including a new subsection about regional processing (page 38). Alternating Co-op (Pages 45-46) rewritten. Archiving replaced deleting VaCert records in "Retention of VA Records" (page 51). Added "Tuition Assistance" (TA) to Helpful Information, (pages 54-55).	7-8,10-13, 32, 37-39, 44-45, 52, 54-55	7-14, 31-32, 37-46, 51 to end
08/22/00	Changed parent school letter directions. Adding the chapter number helps secondary schools.	37	37-38
08/29/00	Updated benefit rates effective 10/1/00.	7-9, 56	7-10, 55-56
10/12/00	Consolidated and rewrote "Break Pay" (page 14). Added "Student Verification of Enrollment", discussing IVR and WAVE. More fully explain clock hour measurement (page 17). Rearranged pages 13-18 for clarity and to make things fit.	13-18	13-18
11/01/00	Revised Forms and Applications. Identified Internet website and the forms online (page 61). New chapter 30 and 35 rates effective 11/1/00 (page 9)	9, 61	9-10, 61-62
02/12/01	Rewrote Retroactive Benefits (page 12) and Break Pay (page 14). Updated "VA On the Web" (page 49). Updated ECAP data and rewrote 2 paragraphs following data (page 53).	12, 14, 49, 53	11-14, 49-50, 53-54
04/18/01	Rewrote the 2 opening paragraphs for Contacting Muskogee (page 50). Rewrote, added, deleted, and cross-referenced several glossary terms.	50, 62-72	49-50,61-72
06/26/01	Revised chapter 30 description to describe kickers and additional payments (page 7). Tuition Assistance rewritten (pages 54-55), with chapter 30 "top-up" added.	7, 54-55	7-8, 53-56

EDUCATION PROGRAMS & BENEFIT PAYMENTS

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The following program descriptions are up-to-date, thumbnail descriptions. Detailed descriptions are available at the Education Benefits & Services Home Page (<http://www.gibill.va.gov>). From the menu in the left frame of the page, click “Education Benefit Programs” to view a general or detailed description of each program.

NOTE: All students who feel they may be eligible for education benefits should submit an application. Even if someone appears ineligible, VA should review his or her application and officially deny or grant benefits.

Chapter 30: Montgomery G.I. Bill—Active Duty

Chapter 30 has four eligibility categories. Category I is by far the largest. It includes veterans who began active duty for the first time after June 30, 1985. Starting 11/1/00, the basic full-time monthly benefit is \$650.00 for three years obligated service (Category IB) or for 2 years active duty and 4 years in the Selected Reserve (Category IC). The basic full-time monthly benefit is \$528.00 for two years obligated service (Category IA).

Military retirees who entered the service (or agreed to delayed entry) before 1/1/77 **and** who were eligible to receive chapter 34 benefits (Vietnam era education program) on 12/31/89 comprise category II. The education benefit for these chapter 34/30 veterans is higher than the standard chapter 30 benefit and it pays an additional amount for dependents. The chapter 34/30 benefit is comparable to the old chapter 34 rate.

Additional veterans may be eligible if they were voluntarily or involuntarily separated from the service because of a reduction in personnel (Category III), or if they were able to convert their education benefit from chapter 32 to chapter 30 (Category IV).

Chapter 30 Kickers and Additional Contributions.

Higher monthly benefits are paid to chapter 30 participants with “kickers” and to chapter 30 participants who make additional chapter 30 payments. The higher benefit rates are paid automatically when benefits are paid. If veterans don’t receive the benefit they believe they are entitled to receive, they should call VA about the discrepancy so that VA can resolve the discrepancy with the Department of Defense.

A kicker is part of the enlistment contract. It’s often referred to by its Madison Avenue name; Army College Fund, Navy Sea College Fund, or whatever the newest recruitment ad calls it. If a contract has a \$12,000 kicker, then the monthly kicker is \$333.33 ($\$12,000 \div 36$ months), which increases the \$650 full-time chapter 30 benefit to \$983.33.

Servicepersons who participate in chapter 30 pay \$1,200 towards their chapter 30 benefit. The \$1,200 is withheld from their pay during their first 12 months of service and it’s **non-refundable**. Starting 11/1/00, servicepersons may pay up to \$600 more towards chapter 30. The amount they pay is matched 9 to 1. A maximum \$600 contribution increases the full-time chapter 30 benefit to \$800 for categories IB, IC and III, and to \$678 for category 1A. Note: Veterans discharged 11/1/00 to 4/30/01 may make the additional payment to VA between 5/1/01 and 7/31/01.

Chapter 32: Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP)

Individuals must have initially entered active duty from 1/1/77 to 6/30/85 and must have enrolled and contributed to VEAP before 4/1/87. Many VEAP era veterans who separated from active duty after 2/2/91 had the opportunity to convert from chapter 32 to chapter 30.

VEAP is a voluntary contribution and matching program. Participants may have contributed as much as \$2,700. The veteran's contributions were matched on a \$2 for \$1 basis by the Government. The monthly rate varies depending on the total contribution made by the veteran and matched by the Government. Additional kickers may have been made by the military.

Chapter 35: Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA)

Educational Assistance paid to dependents of veterans. Starting 11/1/00, the full-time monthly rate is \$588.00. Persons who may be eligible are:

- A child (between ages 18 and 26, with some exceptions) of a veteran who is permanently and totally disabled due to a service-related condition; or who died in service; or who died of a service-connected disability; or who died while evaluated as having total and permanent service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW or MIA.
- The surviving spouse of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability, or died in service, or died while evaluated as having total and permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability. Surviving spouses whose benefits stopped when they remarried can receive DEA benefits again if their remarriage ends by death or divorce, or they cease to live with the person to whom they presented themselves in public as married.
- A spouse of a veteran or serviceperson who has a total and permanent disability resulting from a service-connected disability; or who is listed as a POW or MIA.

Chapter 1606: Montgomery G.I. Bill—Selected Reserve

Educational program for active members of the Selected Reserve. Selected Reserve components of the Ready Reserve include the Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard. Chapter 1606 eligibility is determined by the Department of Defense or by the Department of Transportation (Coast Guard), not by VA. Basic eligibility requires a 6 year obligation to serve in the Selected Reserve and satisfactory participation in required Selected Reserve training.

Starting 10/1/00, members of the Selected Reserve are entitled to full-time education benefits of \$263.00 for a maximum of 36 months or the equivalent in part-time training.

1606 Kickers: An additional amount, called a kicker, may be added to the benefit of some chapter 1606 students. A chapter 1606 kicker may be a part of the original enlistment contract or part of a re-enlistment contract.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS MONTHLY RATES

CHAPTER 30 (BASIC RATES)						
Starting	3 years or more service			Less than 3 years service		
	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time
11/1/00	\$650.00	\$487.50	\$325.00	\$528.00	\$396.00	\$264.00
10/1/00	\$552.00	\$414.00	\$276.00	\$449.00	\$336.75	\$224.50
10/1/99	\$536.00	\$402.00	\$268.00	\$436.00	\$327.00	\$218.00
10/1/98	\$528.00	\$396.00	\$264.00	\$429.00	\$321.75	\$214.50
Less than 1/2-time: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/2-time rate. Quarter-time or less: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/4 of the full-time rate.						

CHAPTER 34/30						
Dependents	Starting 11/1/00			Starting 10/1/00		
	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time
None	\$838.00	\$629.00	\$419.00	\$740.00	\$555.50	\$370.00
1	\$874.00	\$655.50	\$437.00	\$776.00	\$582.00	\$388.00
2	\$905.00	\$679.00	\$452.50	\$807.00	\$605.50	\$403.50
each additional	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$8.50	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$8.50
Less than 1/2 time: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/2-time rate with no dependents. Quarter-time or less: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/4 of the full-time rate with no dependents.						

Servicepersons are paid the veteran rate or a rate that will reimburse tuition and fees, whichever is **lower**. It's not uncommon for servicepersons to apply for benefits for a term that begins a few days or weeks before their discharge from active duty. Servicepersons on terminal leave before discharge do not have to obtain their education officer's signature on the *Application for VA Education Benefits*. Also, they are paid as servicepersons while on terminal leave and as veterans starting the day following discharge. Always report tuition and fees for servicepersons and servicepersons on terminal leave.

CHAPTER 1606				
Starting	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time	<1/2-time
10/1/00	\$263.00	\$197.00	\$131.00	\$65.75
10/1/99	\$255.00	\$191.00	\$127.00	\$63.75
10/1/98	\$251.00	\$188.00	\$125.00	\$62.75
10/1/97	\$208.93	\$156.70	\$104.47	\$52.23
10/1/96	\$203.24	\$152.43	\$101.62	\$50.81

CHAPTER 35				
Starting	Full-time	3/4-time	1/2-time	1/4-time
11/1/00	\$588.00	\$441.00	\$294.00	\$147.00
10/1/98	\$485.00	\$365.00	\$242.00	\$121.00
1/1/90	\$404.00	\$304.00	\$202.00	\$101.00
Less than 1/2-time: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/2-time rate. Quarter-time or less: Reimburse tuition and fees, not to exceed 1/4-time rate.				

COMPARISON OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS

	CH 30	CH 32	CH 35	CH 1606
ELIGIBILITY	All students who feel they are eligible should submit an application. It is important that their application is reviewed and that an official denial or grant of benefits is made by the VA Regional Processing Office.			
	2 years active duty, 3 years active duty, or 2 years active duty plus 4 years reserves.	181 days active duty if enlisted before 9/8/80, 24 months active duty there-after.	Veteran's death or permanent and total disability result of service.	Completion of initial active duty for training. Must be active reservist with 6-year obligation.
BENEFITS FOR INSERVICE STUDENT	Servicepersons are paid the veteran rate or a rate that will reimburse tuition and fees, whichever is lower . Servicepersons often apply for benefits a few days or weeks before their discharge from active duty. Servicepersons on terminal leave before discharge do not have to obtain their education officer's signature on the <i>Application for VA Education Benefits</i> . Also, they are paid as servicepersons while on terminal leave and as veterans starting the day following discharge.			
	Benefit payable after 2 years continuous active duty. Payment may not exceed tuition and fees.	Benefit payable after 3 months contribution.	No	Yes
MAXIMUM ENTITLEMENT	48 months maximum under two or more programs			
	36 months. May extend to end of term if expires during term.	36 months. No extensions.	45 months. No extensions except for child in special restorative training.	36 months. No extensions.
DELIMITING DATE	10 years after discharge. May extend for later period of active duty or disability that prevents completion of program.	10 years after discharge. May extend for later period of active duty or disability that prevents completion of program.	Child: (1) Age 18-26; to age 31 for conditions beyond control or for military service. (2) 8 years from date found eligible if found eligible between 18-26. Spouse: 10 years from date of vets service connected death or date VA determined service connected, which ever is later. May extend to end of term if delimiting date during term, but can't exceed maximum entitlement.	10 years from date first enlisted or separation from reserves whichever is earlier. May extend if disability incurred or aggravated by service in selected reserve prevents completion of program.

	CH 30	CH 32	CH 35	CH 1606
PARTICIPANT PAYMENT	Category I, III, IV: \$1,200 Category II: None	\$25-\$100 per month up to \$2,700. Lump sum payment permitted.	N/A	N/A
PAYMENT REFUND	Only as a death benefit to survivors in certain cases	Yes (decision final once check cashed)	N/A	N/A
DEPENDENTS ALLOWANCE	No, except for category II (34/30)	No	No	No
REMEDIAL, DEFICIENCY & REFRESHER TRAINING	Yes, with entitlement charge	Yes, with entitlement charge	Yes, entitlement charged after first 5 months of full-time training	Yes, with entitlement charge
COOPERATIVE TRAINING	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
INCARCERATED STUDENTS	Benefits reduced	Benefits reduced	Benefits reduced	Benefits reduced
TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE	Yes. Maximum \$1,200. Not more than \$100 per month. No entitlement charge for first \$600.	Yes. Maximum \$1,200. Not more than \$100 per month. No entitlement charge for first \$600.	Yes. Maximum \$1,200. Not more than \$100 per month. No entitlement charge.	Yes. Maximum \$1,200. Not more than \$100 per month. No entitlement charge for first \$600.
MONTHLY VERIFICATION	IHL & NCD VAF 22-8979	NCD only VAF 22-8979	NCD only VAF 22-8979	NCD only letter
BARS TO BENEFITS	<p>Can not receive benefits : 1) Concurrently under two programs. 2) On active duty for any portion of course costs paid by the Armed Forces. 3) For course paid for by the Federal Government under the Government Employee' Training Act.</p>			
	Not eligible if: Service Academy graduate or ROTC commissioned officer who received ROTC scholarship unless eligible before commissioned or the scholarship was \$2,000 or less in any one year while under the ROTC program.		Not eligible if: On active duty except for brief periods of active duty for training.	Not eligible if: 1) Receive ROTC scholarship financial assistance. 2) <1/2-time and in receipt of military tuition assistance.

BENEFIT PAYMENTS

Benefit payments are made directly to students, unless advance payment is paid (see Advance Payment, page { PAGEREF _Ref453558965 }). The payment is made to the student for the number of days the student is certified for the month. If a student is certified for a whole month, the full monthly benefit is paid. If the student is only certified for part of the month, the benefit is prorated as follows:

VA uses a 30-day month. Divide the monthly rate by 30 to get the daily rate. If a student is certified from the 1st through the 15th, the student is certified 15 days and is entitled to 15/30ths of the full monthly benefit. Example: If the monthly benefit is \$100.00 and the student is certified 1/1/00 through 1/15/00, the student is entitled to \$50.00 (\$3.33 per day for 15 days). If the student is certified 1/16/00 through 1/31/00, the student is entitled to \$50.00 (\$3.33 per day for 15 days). If the student is certified 1/1/00 through 1/31/00, the student is entitled to \$100.00 (a full months benefit). Remember, VA uses a 30-day month. Round 1/16/00 through 1/31/00 to 30 (15 days) and round 2/16/00 through 2/28/00 to 30 (15 days).

Standard benefits are described in the monthly rate tables (page { PAGEREF _Ref459510529 }). An additional kicker may be paid to some chapter 30 and chapter 1606 students. If a student paid for part of a month is subsequently certified for the next quarter or semester, VA will automatically pay the break between the quarters or semesters if break pay can be paid (see Break Pay, page { PAGEREF _Ref454765544 }).

Retroactive Benefits

VA benefits can be paid for enrollments up to one year before the date VA receives a student's application. The one year date is determined by the date stamp put on the student's application. If a student asks to be certified retroactively for enrollment periods you haven't certified previously, certify the previous periods the student asks you to certify. VA will determine the date of eligibility and the beginning date from which benefits can be paid.

Chapter 35 retroactive benefits may be handled differently and may exceed one year. Starting 11/1/00, if the chapter 35 eligibility date is more than one year before the date VA makes the eligibility decision, then the eligibility date may be considered to be the application date if the individual applies for chapter 35 within one year of the eligibility decision. Under this circumstance, retroactive benefits may be more than one year.

Change of Address and Direct Deposit

Students must keep their address current. The fastest way to change an address or change a direct deposit is to call VA (1-888-442-4551). The automated functions of the phone server do not include changing address or starting Direct Deposit. Students can bypass the phone server and connect to Muskogee by hitting 1 and then 0 when the recording starts.

If a student calls to start (chapters 30 and 1606 only) or change a direct deposit, the student should have their account information handy. The following information is needed to set up direct deposit and can be found on checks and bank statements:

- Account number
- 9 digit bank routing number
- Type of account (checking or savings)

If a student has direct deposit, the student still needs to keep his or her address current because the verification of enrollment form is mailed to the student's address.

ADVANCE PAYMENT

Advance payment provides funds at the beginning of a school term to help the student meet expenses concentrated at the beginning of the term. Advance payment is the amount payable for the initial month or portion of a month the quarter or semester begins plus the amount payable for the following month.

Participation in advance payment is voluntary on the part schools. If you aren't set up for advance payment and want to be, contact your ELR (see ELRs, page { PAGEREF _Ref515351350 }). Schools must certify that they can carry out the provisions of advance payment. Schools must handle advance pay checks securely and they must give the advance pay check to the student when he or she registers (or not more than 30 days before the beginning of school if registration is earlier).

When a school participates in advance payment, students are eligible for advance payment when:

- The student requests advance pay, **and**
- There's more than 30 days between terms and break pay won't be paid (see Break Pay, page { PAGEREF _Ref454765544 }), **and**
- The student is enrolled at least half-time, **and**
- VA receives the advance payment request at least 30 days but not more than 120 days before the enrollment period.

Advance pay requests should be submitted 30 to 120 days before the begin date. The check will be sent to the school, payable to the student. A separate, *Certification of Delivery* (VA Form 22-1999V) will be sent to the school. When the check is given to the student, immediately complete and return the *Certification of Delivery*.

An advance will pay the first and second month. The first month may be a partial month, with payment pro-rated for the number of days attended that month. Advance pay for a student certified 9/22/97 through 6/13/98 would pay 9/22/97 through 10/31/97. Since VA normally pays after a month is completed, the student wouldn't receive another check until December, when payment for November is made.

When an advance pay check is issued, the next check won't issue unless the *Certification of Delivery* (or the Chapter 1606 generated letter with the same information) mailed to the school is received and processed by VA. If VA sends a letter that says a *Certification of Delivery* wasn't received, there are two things you might do.

- Call VA (1-888-442-4551) and explain the problem to the Education Benefits Specialist who answers the phone. If the *Certification of Delivery* has not been input, ask the Education Benefits Specialist to enter the certification of delivery (COD) on the CERT screen.
- Send VA a 1999b annotated "In lieu of certification of delivery—advance pay check delivered" in remarks.



VaCert: Create a form students can sign and date to request advance pay. If a student requests advance pay, have the student complete the form and keep it with your file copy of the 1999. If you have a signed request, check the "Advance Pay" box when you create the student's 1999. The 1999 will be annotated "Advance Payment Requested and Signature of Student on Record".

BREAK PAY

Break (Interval) pay between semesters, quarters, and terms is paid according to the rules outlined below starting 11/1/00. The rules are basically the same before 11/1/00, except “Break more than 8 weeks (56 days)” was “Break involves full calendar month” prior to the 11/1/00. Breaks are paid at the rate paid on the ending date of the term preceding the break. Breaks are paid automatically by VA unless one of the following restrictions precludes payment for the break.

Restrictions on Break Pay

- The break is more than 8 weeks
- The term before or after the break is shorter than the break
- Training time the last day of the preceding the semester, quarter, or term is less than ½-time
- The student withdrew from all courses during the preceding semester, quarter, or term
- The student will exhaust his or her entitlement and not paying the break is to the student’s advantage
- The student requests no pay for a break before payment for the break is authorized
- The student is on active duty

Keeping these restrictions in mind, the following tables summarize break pay for students who continue at the same school and for students who transfer from one school to another:

Same School	Break more than 8 weeks (56 days)		Don’t pay
	Break doesn’t exceed 8 weeks and the terms before and after the break are not shorter than the break		Pay, unless summer term rule applies
Change School	Change of program		Don’t pay
	Same program	Break more than 30 days	Don’t pay
		Break 30 days or less	Pay

Summer Term Rule

Summer term is the period of instruction between school years. A summer term may be divided into several sessions. VA considers the **length** of “summer term” as the sum of all summer sessions (count overlapping days only once). **Examples:** A school has an 8 week, a 12 week, and three 4 week sessions. (1) If a student attends the eight week session, the student attends 8 weeks. (2) If the student attends the first and the third four week session, the student’s combined attendance is eight weeks. The following table describes summer break pay.

Summer Term Rule	Spring-summer or summer-fall break doesn’t exceed 8 weeks and the terms before and after the break are not shorter than the break		Pay
	Interval between two summer sessions is more than 30 days.	Combined days of the summer sessions is less than 8 weeks	Don’t pay
		Combined days of the summer sessions 8 weeks or more	Pay

If terms overlap, each beginning and ending date must be considered and the break paid using the combination of dates that pays the highest rate to the student. **Example:** A student is certified 8 credits for an 8 week term and 3 credits for an 11 week term that starts the same day as the 8 week term. The student will be paid full-time for 8 weeks and <½-time for 3 weeks (see Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods on the next page). If the student is certified fall quarter, VA will adjust the break to pay the last three weeks of the 11 week term **and** the break between summer and fall full-time, the higher combination. The logic: If the student did not take the 3 credit, 11 week term; the student would be paid full-time for the break. In other words, the “last day of the preceding term is less than ½-time” restriction is moot in this case.

SUMMER TERMS AND NONSTANDARD ENROLLMENT PERIODS

Standard quarters are 10 to 13 weeks in length and standard semesters are 15 to 19 weeks in length. Standard quarters and semesters generally adhere to the school's academic calendar. When courses don't follow this standard format, their actual beginning dates, ending dates, and number of credits must be reported. If several courses are nonstandard length, the different beginning and/or ending dates should be reported on separate lines, listed chronologically by beginning date. If courses have the same beginning and ending dates, their credits can be combined.

VA converts credit earned during nonstandard quarters or semesters to credit hour equivalents. **VA makes the conversion, not schools. Schools must report actual credit hours.** Credit hour equivalency tables are on the next page. The formula for converting quarters or semesters to credit equivalents is the same, except for the multiplier. The formulas are:

- **Quarter:** $\text{Credit} \times 12 \div \text{weeks} = \text{credit hour equivalents}$. Four quarter credits earned in 4 weeks, for example, is the equivalent of 12 credits earned during a standard quarter ($4 \times 12 \div 4 = 12$) and will pay full-time for 4 weeks.
- **Semester:** $\text{Credit} \times 18 \div \text{weeks} = \text{credit hour equivalents}$. Four semester credits earned in 4 weeks is the equivalent of 18 credits earned during a standard semester ($4 \times 18 \div 4 = 18$) and will pay full-time for 4 weeks.

VA pays education benefits for nonstandard enrollment periods based on credit equivalents. Remember, schools report actual number of credits; VA makes the conversion. When enrollment periods overlap, credit hour equivalents for the period of overlap are combined.

Example:

⇒ If a quarter system school (multiple is 12) certified sessions as follows

Start	End	Credit
06/25/01	07/20/01	3
06/25/01	08/17/01	3
06/25/01	09/07/01	3

⇒ Muskogee would calculate credit hour equivalents and credit as follows

Credit Hour Equivalents & Credit
$3 \times 12 \div 4 = 9$ credit equivalents (Weeks: round 3 days or less down and round 4 days or more up)
$3 \times 12 \div 8 = 4.5$ credit equivalents
Standard length quarter, 3 credit

⇒ And the student would be paid as follows

6/25/01	7/21/01	8/18/01 through 9/7/01
Full-time ($9 + 4 + 3 = 16$)	½-time ($4 + 3 = 7$)	<½-time (3). Note: Tuition & Fees must be reported for this 3 credits since it's <½-time

NOTE: If the student is certified fall quarter 2001 starting 9/24/01, the break between summer and fall will pay ½-time from 8/18/01 to the beginning of fall because the period 6/25/01 to 8/17/01 is 8 weeks, the 8/17/01 to 9/23/01 break is less than 56 days, the break is not longer than the terms before or after it, and the rate paid

8/17/01 at the end of the period is ½-time (See Restrictions on Break Pay and Summer Term Rule, page{
PAGEREF_Ref495992135 }).

Credit Hour Equivalency

The credit hour equivalency tables below show training time for nonstandard length quarters and semesters. To determine the number of weeks, count the number of days in the enrollment period (first day through the last day) and divide by 7. Disregard a remainder of 3 days or less and consider a remainder of 4 days or more a full week.

Quarter Hour Equivalency Table

Number of Weeks Per Term

Quarter Hours Per Term	10 to 13	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12 or more	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
11	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
10	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
9	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
8	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
7	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
6	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
5	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
4	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT
3	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT
2	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	FT	FT
1	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	1/2	FT

Semester Hour Equivalency Table

Number of Weeks Per Term

Semester Hours Per Term	15 to 19	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
12 or more	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
11	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
10	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
9	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
8	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
7	1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
6	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
5	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT	FT
3	1/4	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	3/4	FT	FT	FT	FT
2	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	<1/2	<1/2	1/2	1/2	3/4	FT	FT	FT
1	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	1/4	<1/2	1/2	3/4	FT

TRAINING TIME

In a standard quarter or semester, training time is measured as follows:

Undergraduate

- 12 credit hours is full-time
- 9-11 credit hours is $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
- 6-8 credit hours is $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 4-5 credit hours is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ -time ($<\frac{1}{2}$ -time)
- 1-3 credit hours is $\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less

NOTE: Full-time is 13 or 14 credit hours at some schools. These schools should contact their ELR about measuring training time.

Graduate

Accredited schools report training time based on the school's academic regulations. Non-accredited schools report training time as undergraduate.

Clock Hours

Sometimes training time is based on clock hours. For example, cooperative training (page { PAGEREF _Ref453562632 }), practical training (page { PAGEREF _Ref453562679 }), advance professional training such as a medical residency, and some vocational programs.

Benefits are paid based on clock hours of attendance per week. The beginning date, ending date, and number of clock hours a student is scheduled to attend each week must be reported. If clock hours per week vary **and** the benefit amount is effected, the variance must be reported for calendar weeks, Sunday through Saturday, between the beginning and ending dates.

Full-time measurement is 18 clock hours if classroom instruction predominates and 22 clock hours if shop practice predominates. The clock hour measurement for all approved programs measured and paid by clock hours is listed in OLAF.

Clock hour training time is measured as follows:

18 Hours: Theory Predominates

- 18 hours or more is full-time
- 13-17 hours is $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
- 9-12 hours is $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 5-8 hours is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 1-4 hours is $\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less

22 Hours: Shop/Practice Predominates

- 22 hours or more is full-time
- 16-21 hours is $\frac{3}{4}$ -time
- 11-15 hours is $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 6-10 hours is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ -time
- 1-5 hours is $\frac{1}{4}$ -time or less

Tuition and Fees

When training time is less than ½-time, tuition and fees must be reported. The amount reported should be the **actual** amount charged the student. If tuition and fees are \$0.00 or a reduced amount, report the actual amount.

If a student's enrollment has overlapping enrollment periods, report tuition and fees for any enrollment period that, by itself, is less than ½-time. For instance, if a student is certified 9 credits for an eight week period and 3 credits for an eleven week period, then tuition and fees must be reported for the 3 credit, 11 week period. Report tuition and fees for the 3 credit enrollment period as the amount charged for the 3 credits, not the amount charged for all 11 credit.

STUDENT VERIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT

Chapter 30 students and chapter 32 and 35 noncollege degree (NCD) students must verify their enrollment. A *Student Verification of Enrollment* (VAF 22-8979) form is mailed to the student just before the end of the month. The student must complete and return the form to release the education benefit for that month.

Chapter 30 students—only chapter 30 at this time—can verify their enrollment by Interactive Voice Response (IVR) or by Web Automated Verification of Enrollment (WAVE).

- IVR allows students to “phone in” (877-823-2378) their monthly verifications.
- WAVE allows students to verify their enrollment on the Internet at the Education Service web site (www.gibill.va.gov). Click the link to WAVE.

NOTE: If a chapter 30 student uses IVR or WAVE, the student **does not** need to complete and return the *Student Verification of Enrollment* form. IVR and WAVE replace the form

Student Verification of Enrollment forms aren't mailed to chapter 1606 students or to chapter 32 and 35 Institution of Higher Learning (IHL, i.e. college degree) students. Instead, schools are mailed verification forms periodically to complete and to return for these students. Someday verifications will work for all students like it does for chapter 30.

ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATION

GENERAL

Keep a copy of the *Enrollment Certification* in the student's file. Include all identifying information, including the middle initial or name of the student.

All VA students must file an application when they first start your school. Students who haven't received VA education benefits before should file an original application (veterans VAF 22-1990; dependents VAF 22-5490). Students who have received VA benefits at another school before entering your school should file a *Request for Change of Program or Place of Training* (veterans VAF 22-1995; dependents VAF 22-5495).

NOTE: Students who take courses at a supplemental school do not need to file a *Request for Change of Program or Place of Training* (see Supplemental and Concurrent Enrollments, page { PAGEREF _Ref453559499 }). Submit the application and *Enrollment Certification* as a package, stapled together, whenever possible.



VaCert: *Transmit 1999s electronically for all students except those that require an original Application for Education Benefits. If an original application is needed, don't "Add to Transmission" after you create the 1999. Instead, print two copies. Staple one copy to the original application and mail the application and the 1999 to Muskogee. Keep the second copy and a photocopy of the application in the student's file.*

When you prepare a second or subsequent 1999 for a student, VaCert will display a copy of the previous 1999. Before you prepare the new 1999, always click the New Cert button (called the clear button before revision Qb2) on the right side of the window. The New Cert button will clear the data from the last 1999 and give you the equivalent of a blank piece of paper. Also, before you prepare a new 1999, always look at the registration data to make sure the credit allowed, program, or any other entry should be changed.

VaCert will print a list of the records you transmit if you setup VaCert to do so. In EtCert (the 16 bit communications program), select File/Print Certification Setup from the drop down menu and check the transmission listing box. In EtCert 32 (the 32 bit communications program), select setup/print options and check the appropriate boxes. Chronologically file transmission lists in a binder or file folder. When it fills up, recycle the oldest lists.

TYPE OF TRAINING

Select "Undergraduate" for undergraduate degree programs, post-baccalaureate programs required to obtain a teacher certification or endorsement, and post-baccalaureate courses required to gain admission to a graduate degree program.

Select "Graduate or Advanced Professional" for graduate degree programs.

Select "Noncollege Degree (NCD)" for certificate programs.

NAME OF PROGRAM

The program certified must be a degree or certificate granted by your school and approved by the State Approving Agency (SAA). Approved programs are listed in the SAA approval letter and in OLAF, VA's On-Line Approval File.

Enter degree and major for bachelor and master degree programs, B.A. History or M.A.T., for example. If a student's objective is a certificate, enter the name of the certificate.

Undeclared Major

Students pursuing a bachelor's degree may not have to declare a major before their junior year at some schools. If a freshman or sophomore hasn't declared a major, report the student's program as Bachelor (undeclared). The student can not be certified beyond his or her sophomore year unless a major is declared.

Nonmatriculated Students

VA defines matriculated as having been formally admitted to a college or university as a degree-seeking student. VA educational benefits can not be paid to nonmatriculated college or university students unless they are pending admission to your school. In that case they can be certified for two quarters or semesters. The student may be certified beyond this two quarter or two semester limit only if the student is admitted to your school as a degree-seeking student, irrespective of the number of credits taken.

Certify a nonmatriculated student's program as bachelor (nonmatriculated) or post-baccalaureate (nonmatriculated), report prior credit as pending, and certify the student for one quarter or semester. The student can only be certified one more quarter or semester as a nonmatriculated student. If a nonmatriculated student takes a course that will not apply to the degree program the student seeks admission to, the course may not be certified for VA purposes unless it is a prerequisite course required to be admitted to your school or into a specific degree program offered by your school. When a nonmatriculated student is formally admitted, the subsequent *Enrollment Certification* must report the student's program and credit allowed.

NOTE: A student who isn't matriculated at your school may be pursuing a degree at another college or university. The two quarter or semester limit doesn't apply to students taking courses at your school that apply to a program at another college or university. The procedure for certifying students matriculated elsewhere is described under *Supplemental and Concurrent Enrollments* (see page { PAGEREF _Ref453593158 }).

Leveling Courses

If a school requires a student with a bachelor's degree to pursue undergraduate courses to satisfy admission requirements for a graduate degree program (leveling), then the courses required for admission may be certified as part of that graduate degree program. In order to certify the courses, however, the following requirements must be met:

- The student must apply to the school as a graduate degree seeking student and the student must furnish the school transcripts of all previous education and training.
- The school must determine whether the student meets its matriculation criteria. This process includes evaluation of previous education and training. If the student cannot matriculate immediately upon enrollment, then the requirements the student must meet in order to matriculate must be identified and documented.
- If undergraduate courses are required to matriculate, the school must prepare a statement on the school's letterhead, signed by a responsible school official—The Department Head, for example—that outlines the required undergraduate courses (identified by course number and name). This statement must be kept in the student's file.
- If the student is only certified for undergraduate courses, report training time according to undergraduate credit measurement.
- If both graduate and undergraduate course work is certified, report training time according to undergraduate or graduate measurement, whichever is greater.

CREDIT ALLOWED

Credit allowed for prior education and training must be reported on a student's initial *Enrollment Certification* and following any change in program. Only credit that applies toward completion of the student's program should be reported as credit allowed. Enter one of the following entries in the Credit for Prior Training box.

- If none, enter “**None**”.
- If transfer credit is accepted, report **the number of credits allowed** that apply towards completion of the student's program. The preferred method for reporting credit is: <credit that applies> of <total credit accumulated> as of <start of the quarter or semester up to which the credit accumulated>. For example, “24 of 36 as of 1/5/98” tells VA that 24 of 36 credits accumulated before 1/5/98 apply to the student's program. A copy of the credit evaluation should be kept in the student's file.
- If credit may be allowed but hasn't been evaluated, enter “**Pending**” and certify the student for one quarter or semester. When the evaluation is finished, recertify the student, report credit allowed and extend the period certified through spring quarter or semester, if appropriate, but not beyond.
- If an evaluation isn't completed by the end of the quarter, certify the student a second quarter or semester, reporting “**Pending 2nd Quarter (or Semester)**”. Education benefits can not be paid more than two semesters or three quarters unless prior credit is evaluated and reported to VA. If needed, certify the student a third quarter, reporting “**Pending 3rd Quarter**”.
- Enter “**Continuing**” on all 1999s for a student continuing in the same program after credit allowed has been reported. “Continuing” tells VA, “Same school, same program; extend the ending date”.



VaCert: Enter none, continuing, pending, and pending 2nd semester (or pending 2nd quarter, and pending 3rd quarter) in SmartWords. Select Setup/SmartWords from the drop down menu.

When you prepare a second or subsequent 1999 for a student, always check the credit allowed entry on the registration screen and change the entry as appropriate. For example, if you reported “None”, you will probably want to change the entry to “Continuing” when you prepare the next 1999. Please stick to the credit allowed entries described above. They each have a specific meaning and they facilitate processing.

CHANGE OF PROGRAM

If a VA student changes program after starting your school, from BA Psychology to BA Biology, for instance, the student must complete a *Request for Change of Program or Place of Training*. Submit the *Request for Change of Program or Place of Training* and an *Enrollment Certification* together. The *Enrollment Certification* must identify the new program (See Name of Program, page { PAGEREF _Ref453559728 }) and a new credit evaluation must report credit allowed toward the new program (See Credit Allowed, page { PAGEREF _Ref453559790 }).



VaCert: A signed and dated request from the student must be kept in the student’s file at your school. The student can use a *Request for Change of Program or Place of Training*, a form you create for change requests, or the student can simply sign and date your file copy of the 1999. Whichever method is used, you must write “**Student’s signed request for this change of program or place of training on file**” in the remarks section of the 1999. Hint: Put the statement in SmartComments. Select Setup/SmartComments from the drop down menu.

ENROLLMENT DATES

Enter the beginning date and the ending date of each quarter, semester, or session on a separate line. A quarter or semester is the first day of class through the last day of final exams. If a student plans to attend through spring quarter or semester and prior credit has been evaluated and reported, certify the student through spring quarter.

Certify summer on a separate *Enrollment Certification*. If a student’s summer enrollment is at least half-time and eight weeks or longer, you have early fall registration, and you know the student will attend the next academic year; certify the student summer through the following spring on the summer *Enrollment Certification* listing each term on a separate line.

If a student is <1/2-time or is on active duty, the student can only be certified one quarter or semester at a time and tuition and fees must be reported.

A standard quarter is 10-13 weeks and a standard semester is 15 to 19 weeks in length with courses beginning the first week and ending the last week, the last day of final examinations. If a course doesn't follow the standard quarter or semester format, enter the actual beginning date, ending date, and credit for the course on a separate line. Courses with different beginning and/or ending dates should be

on separate lines, listed chronologically by beginning date (see Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods, page { PAGEREF _Ref453559875 }).



VaCert: *SmartDates simplify entry. Select Setup/SmartDates from the drop down menu. Keep one set of dates blank so you can drag and drop the empty set to erase dates quickly.*

CREDIT

Enter the number of credits the student will earn each quarter or semester. If a student is certified less than $<1/2$ -time or drops below $1/2$ -time, tuition and fees must be reported.

Undergraduate: If the student will be full-time, but you don't know the exact number of credits that will be taken, enter 12. In a standard quarter or semester:

- 12 credits or more are full-time
- 9-11 credits are $3/4$ -time
- 6-8 credits are $1/2$ -time
- 4-5 credits are less than $<1/2$ -time
- 1-3 credits are $1/4$ -time or less

Graduate: Enter the training time according to your school's academic policy.

Course Applicability

Only credits that apply toward completion of the student's degree or certificate program can be certified for VA purposes. If 12 credit hours are certified, all 12 must apply. If a student enrolls for 12 credits, but only 9 satisfy a degree requirement, certify 9 credits.

There are two exceptions to the rule about course applicability:

- The last quarter or semester before graduation, all credit hours taken can be certified if 1 or more of the credits **satisfy a graduation requirement**. Last means **last**. There is only one last quarter or semester.
- If the college allows substitutions for program requirements, VA will allow course substitutions if they are approved by the college and documented in the student's file.

Changes in credits don't have to be reported unless training time changes. If an undergraduate student is certified for 15 credits in a standard quarter or semester, for example, it isn't necessary to report a change **unless** applicable credits drop below 12.

Repeating Courses

Courses that are failed or for which the grade does not meet minimum requirements for graduation may be certified for VA purposes if they are repeated.

Courses that are successfully completed may not be certified for VA purposes if they are repeated. If students must take additional courses in order to raise their GPA to graduate, the courses must be courses that have not already been successfully completed by the student.

Remedial and Deficiency Courses

Remedial and deficiency courses are courses designed to correct deficiencies in basic mathematics, English, and reading at the elementary or secondary level. Remedial and deficiency courses must be approved by the State Approving Agency (SAA). If they are, they may be certified as part of an approved program, but only for students for whom a verifiable need has been established. Remedial and deficiency (R/D in VaCert) courses should be certified in the appropriate block of the *Enrollment Certification*.

- Chapters 30, 32, and 1606: Entitlement is charged for remedial and deficiency training.
- Chapter 35: Entitlement is **not** charged for 5 months of full-time remedial and deficiency training. If a chapter 35 student is certified for 6 standard credits and 6 remedial credits, payment is full-time, but entitlement is charged ½-time.



VaCert: Enter remedial and deficiency credits in the R/D column on the 1999. **Do not list remedial and deficiency courses or independent study courses in remarks.** Keep test results or other documents that support the need for remedial and deficiency courses in the student's file.

Practical Training

Practical training is academic training that includes actual job experience. Practical training courses must be approved by the SAA. Some practical training is only measured in clock hours—a medical residency, for example—and some practical training is measured in credit hours. When a practical training course is measured in credit hours by a school, the school can certify the course by credit hours or by clock hours, whichever is to the advantage of the student. Twelve credit hours or 18 clock hours of attendance is considered full-time.

Student Teaching

If a student takes a 6 credit hour student teaching course that requires 30 clock hours attendance a week, certify the course in clock hours. The student is ½-time by credit hours, but full-time by clock hours. If you certify clock hours, in remarks enter: “Student teaching course measured in clock hours according to M22-4, Part IV, Paragraph 7.09.”

Other Practical Training

Other courses may be approved by the SAA as practical training; for example, externship, internship, and practicum. Like student teaching, these courses can be certified in credit hours or by clock hours, whichever is to the student's advantage. Examples: (1) If a student takes a 6 credit hour externship that requires 24 clock hours attendance per week, certify the course in clock hours. (2) It's possible to certify credit hours and clock hours during the same quarter or semester. If a student takes a 3 credit lecture course and a 4 credit internship that requires 12 clock hours per week, certify 3 credit hours and 12 clock hours. Seven credits would be ½-time, but 3 credits and 12 clock hours would be ¾-time. In remarks enter, “Student taking a 3 credit lecture course and a 3 credit, 12 clock hour internship. Measure according to M22-4, Part IV, Paragraph 7.09.”

Independent Study (Internet and Distance Learning)

Independent study is a course or program offered without regularly scheduled, conventional classroom or laboratory sessions. The courses or programs must consist of a prescribed curriculum with provision for interaction by mail, telephone (toll-free to the student), computer, or personally between the student and a regularly employed faculty member of the school. Independent study courses and programs must be accredited and must lead to a standard college degree. Further, they must be specifically approved for VA purposes by the SAA.

Internet and distance learning courses and programs that meet the criteria for independent study and that are described in the approved catalog can be certified as independent study (I/S in VaCert) on the *Enrollment Certification* (there must be a beginning and ending date). Independent study courses are paid the same as resident courses.

MAILING AND TRANSMITTING ENROLLMENT CERTIFICATIONS

Education claims are processed in Muskogee. The address is:

Department of Veterans Affairs
VA Regional Office
PO Box 8888
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888

Enrollment certifications can be submitted before the term begins, unless training time is less than ½-time or the veteran is on active duty. If a student is less than ½-time or on active duty, the Enrollment Certification must be submitted on or after the first day of class and tuition and fees must be reported.

NOTE: Muskogee adopted a “temporary” deviation that eliminates “confirmed enrollments”. There will be a small number of certifications VA’s computer systems can’t process before the term starts. When this happens, Muskogee will hold the certification and input it after the term begins.



VaCert: *If an original application (22-1990 or 22-5490) must be filed, do not transmit the 1999. Print the 1999 and mail the 1999 to Muskogee with the application. **NOTE:** If the student has a certificate of eligibility, an original application is not needed and the 1999 can be transmitted.*

Don’t enter anything in the 1999’s remarks section unless it’s required or it’s necessary. Required entries are described at different points in this Handbook. Use those remarks exactly as they are described. Electronic 1999s are processed by VA’s Electronic Certification Automated Processing (ECAP) program. Many 1999s can be processed by ECAP the day they are received. If there’s an entry in the remarks section, ECAP can’t process the 1999 completely. It can only input the 1999’s data into a “pending issue file” and refer the 1999 to an adjudicator to review and to finish. . Some examples of unnecessary remarks are: Confirmed Enrollment, Summer 1999, full-time, overlapping terms, accelerated terms, and Chapter 30.

Keep in mind that ECAP can currently only process up to 3 separate enrollment lines per enrollment certification. Please try to limit your electronic submissions to 3 enrollment lines. However, it is

important to list each term. For instance, don't combine the academic year into one line if the student is taking the same number of hours each quarter or semester. Each quarter or semester should be reported on a separate line. As enhancements are made to ECAP, a larger and larger percentage of 1999s will be processed by machine. And soon, 1999bs too.

The certifying official's name and the school's address or phone number can be changed by selecting Maintenance/School Information from the drop down menu. If you have both IHL and NCD facility codes, the change will need to be entered on two separate screens.

NOTICE OF CHANGE IN STUDENT STATUS

TERMINATION AND ADJUSTMENT

The *Notice of Change in Student Status* (VA Form 22-1999b) is divided into two distinct parts: adjustment and termination.

- **Adjustment** means a change needs to be made to the data previously certified. The day the change is effective and the type of adjustment should be reported. If training time drops to less than ½-time, tuition and fees must be reported.
- **Termination** means the student is no longer in school. The last date of attendance and the reason for termination should be reported.

DROPS AND WITHDRAWALS

All withdrawals must be reported. Reductions do not have to be reported unless training time changes (see Credit, page { PAGEREF _Ref453559982 }). If a student certified for 15 credits drops a course, it isn't necessary to report the change unless applicable credits drop below 12. If a reduction drops a student to less than ½-time, tuition and fees must be reported. Be careful with nonstandard enrollment period reductions (see Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560032 } and Credit Hour Equivalency, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560056 }).

NOTE: Changes in tuition and fees must be reported for students on active duty or training at <½-time even if there is no change in the actual training time.

If a student withdraws during the college's drop-add period, identify the adjustment or termination as "during drop period". The drop-add period is the period at the beginning of the quarter or semester when a student can withdraw from a course and the withdrawal or termination is not recorded on the student's transcript. **Note:** For VA purposes the drop date **can not be more than 30 days** from the beginning date of the term, quarter, or semester.

If a student withdraws after the drop period, report the adjustment or termination as "after drop period–nonpunitive grades assigned" or "after drop period–punitive grades assigned" as appropriate. A nonpunitive grade is a grade that is not calculated into the student's grade point average. A punitive grade is a grade that is calculated into the student's grade point average. Accurately identify whether the grade is nonpunitive or punitive. The action VA takes differs for nonpunitive and punitive grades. If the grade is nonpunitive, mitigating circumstances are an issue (see Mitigating Circumstances, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560109 }). Check "Yes", "No", or "Unknown" in the mitigating circumstances box.



VaCert: Terminology is different in VaCert; for example, "during drop-add period", "after drop-add NP" (nonpunitive), and "after drop-add P" (punitive).

When you reduce a quarter or semester and a subsequent enrollment period is certified, a window will ask, "Is the student attending period(s)" If you choose yes, the remark "Student will attend all subsequent enrollment periods as previously certified" will be put in remarks and VA will not

change what you certified for the subsequent period(s). If you choose no, VA will reduce all subsequent periods unless those periods are adjusted too.

Mitigating Circumstances

If a student drops a course or withdraws from school after the drop period and receives a nonpunitive grade, VA will reduce benefits effective the first day of the term unless mitigating circumstances are found.

Mitigating circumstances are circumstances beyond the student's control that prevent the student from continuing in school or that cause the student to reduce credits. Examples are:

- An illness or injury afflicting the student during the enrollment period.
- An illness or death in the student's immediate family.
- An unavoidable change in the student's conditions of employment.
- An unavoidable geographical transfer resulting from the student's employment.
- Immediate family or financial obligations beyond the control of the claimant which require him or her to suspend pursuit of the program of education to obtain employment.
- Discontinuance of the course by the school.
- Unanticipated active military service, including active duty for training.
- Unanticipated difficulties with childcare arrangements the student has made for the period during which he or she is attending classes.

When a student terminates or reduces **after** the drop period and a nonpunitive grade is assigned, mitigating circumstances are an issue. If mitigating circumstances are needed and adequate evidence of mitigating circumstances is not received with the *Notice of Change in Student Status*; VA will not pay for the course or courses in question. If the student has already been paid for the course or courses, VA will create an overpayment (subject to the 6-credit hour exclusion described below) from the beginning of the term, quarter, or semester.

If you know what the student's mitigating circumstance is, concisely describe the circumstance in remarks. For example, you might enter: "Student withdrew 5/14/98 following Father's death on 4/22/98." Submitting the reason for the reduction or withdrawal at the time the change is reported will help the student avoid or reduce an overpayment if the change is for an acceptable reason.

6-Credit Hour Exclusion

VA automatically grants mitigating circumstances for up to 6 credits the first time a student reduces or terminates and mitigating circumstances must be considered. This automatic grant is called the 6-Credit Hour Exclusion. The exclusion is a **one time grant** made the first time mitigating circumstances must be considered for the student. Up to 6 credits can be excluded if the student has been awarded benefits for the credit. The 6-credit hour exclusion cannot be granted if the student **completes** the term and receives nonpunitive grades.

- If the student withdraws from 3 credits, the exclusion will be granted for 3 credits and the student's one time exclusion is used.
- If the student withdraws from 12 credits, the exclusion will be granted for 6 credits, the student's one time exclusion is used, and the student must provide mitigating circumstances for the other 6 credits.

PUNITIVE GRADES

A punitive grade is a grade that does not count as earned credit and that is calculated into the student's grade point average. Punitive grades do not have to be reported to VA. If a student receives an "F", for example, it does not have to be reported to VA. If punitive grades lead to unsatisfactory progress, however, the student must be terminated for unsatisfactory progress according to the school's academic policy (see Standards of Progress, page { PAGEREF _Ref453575104 }).

NOTE: Some schools have a "forgiveness" policy that allows students to repeat an "F" for a better grade. If the student receives a better grade, the "F" is forgiven and converted to a nonpunitive grade. This specific nonpunitive grade does not have to be reported to VA. However, if the student receives another "F" and one "F" becomes a nonpunitive grade, the nonpunitive "F" must be reported as a nonpunitive grade.

AUDIT

Audited courses may not be certified, with one exception. If the school's grading policy allows a student who registers for credit to later change to audit, report the change from credit to audit as a withdrawal, effective the day the student changed from credit to audit. Report the withdrawal as you would other withdrawals.

NONPUNITIVE GRADES-END OF TERM

A nonpunitive grade is a grade that does not count as earned credit and that is not calculated into the grade point average. If a student completes the term and receives nonpunitive grades, the nonpunitive grades must be reported to VA if they change training time (see Credit, page { PAGEREF _Ref453559982 }). An example of a nonpunitive grade is a "X" (no basis for grade), a "NP" (no pass), or a "U" (unsatisfactory) that does not count as earned credit and that is not calculated into the grade point average.

NOTES: Withdrawals and incompletes may be nonpunitive, but are described elsewhere (see Drops and Withdrawals, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560210 }, and Incompletes, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560239 }). Grades like "P" (Pass) or "S" (Satisfactory) are not calculated into the student's grade point average, but do count as credit earned. Since these grades are earned credit, they are not nonpunitive grades that need to be reported to VA.

The effective date for nonpunitive grades is the ending date of the term. If the 1999b is an adjustment, the reason is "Student Completed Term But Nonpunitive Grades Assigned For One Or More Courses." If the student earned 9 credits and received 3 nonpunitive credits, report the adjustment as 12 to 9 credits. If the 1999b is a termination, select "Other" or "Unsatisfactory Attendance, Conduct, or Progress" as the reason and report the number of credit hours completed and the number of nonpunitive credit hours earned in the remarks section. Example: "Student earned 6 credits and received 6 nonpunitive credits, reducing him (or her) from 12 to 6."



VaCert: If the 1999b is an adjustment, the reason for adjustment is "Completed term W/NP grades". W/NP means "with nonpunitive". If the 1999b is a termination, select "Other (see

remarks)” or “Unsatisfactory Progress” as the reason and report the number of credit hours completed and the number of nonpunitive credit hours earned in the remarks section.

INCOMPLETES

There are two procedures for incomplete grades; one for incompletes that remain permanent nonpunitive grades and another for incompletes that convert to a letter grade (within one year).

Incomplete Becomes a Permanent Nonpunitive Grade

Incomplete grades must be tracked and reported as nonpunitive grades within 30 days of the one year anniversary of their assignment. If training time is not affected, an incomplete does not need to be tracked. For example: A student takes 15 credits that apply to his or her program, completes 12 credits, and receives 3 credits incomplete. Training time is not affected by the incomplete because the incomplete will not reduce the student below full-time (see Credit, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560306 }). Be careful with nonstandard enrollment period incompletes (see Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560352 }, and Credit Hour Equivalency, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560390 }).

A list of students with incomplete grades should be made at the end of each quarter or semester. At the end of each successive term, quarter, or semester, review the list and cross off students whose incompletes have been completed. At the end of one year, report the incompletes that were not completed on a *Notice of Change in student Status* as an adjustment. Select “Student completed term with one or more nonpunitive grades” as the reason for the adjustment. In remarks, enter a statement like: “Incomplete winter 1999 not completed within one year. Next quarter started 3/29/99.” **NOTE:** Reporting the start date of the next enrollment period if the student was enrolled identifies the break period so the award can be adjusted correctly.

If incompletes become **permanent**, nonpunitive grades in less than one year, they no longer need to be tracked. At some schools, for instance, incompletes become permanent, nonpunitive grades if not completed by the fourth week of the following term, quarter, or semester. If this is the case, simply wait the four weeks and report the incompletes as nonpunitive grades if they are not completed (see Nonpunitive Grades, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560447 }).



VaCert: *Prepare a 1999b. Clear the enrollment data (clear button), click the red button, enter the data originally certified for the term in question, enter any other adjustments that were made to the term, and then enter the adjustment for the incomplete. In remarks, enter “Student received incompletes that were not completed within one year.”*

Incomplete Converts to a Letter Grade

Incompletes at many schools convert to an “F” or to an alternate letter grade if they are not completed by a specific date. Incompletes do not need to be reported to VA if they convert to a letter grade (A, B, C, D, F, or Pass) within one year. Incompletes **do** need to be reported as nonpunitive grades if they convert to a nonpunitive grade (e.g., No Pass if the NP is nonpunitive). If the converted grades result in unsatisfactory progress, the student may need to be terminated for unsatisfactory progress.

POLICY & PROCEDURE

SUPPLEMENTAL AND CONCURRENT ENROLLMENTS

A student may take courses that apply to his or her degree at more than one school. The school that will grant the degree is the student's "parent" school. All other schools are "secondary" schools.

VA can pay benefits for courses taken at secondary schools. If the student is only enrolled at the secondary school (supplemental enrollment), VA will pay for the credits taken at the secondary school. If the student is enrolled at the parent school and the secondary school at the same time (concurrent enrollment), VA will pay for the combined credit, taking overlapping enrollment dates into account.

If You're the "Parent" School

If a student takes courses elsewhere to satisfy requirements for a degree he or she is pursuing at your school, then you are the parent school and the other school is the secondary school. Prepare a letter (hereafter called a "parent school letter") addressed to the VA Certifying Official at the secondary school. Mail, e-mail, or let the student hand carry the letter to the secondary school. Keep a copy of the letter in the student's file. The letter must:

1. Identify the student (name, social security number, and education chapter; file number and suffix for chapter 35) as a student at your school (name and facility code) pursuing a *<insert name of program>*.
2. State, "The courses listed below satisfy *<insert name of program>* requirements and will transfer at full value to *<insert name of your school>*."
3. List the courses the student is or will take at the secondary school that your school will accept as transfer credit towards the student's program.
4. State, "*<Student>* intends to take the above courses at *<Secondary School>* *<Identify term, e.g., spring term 2001>*. Please certify the course(s) to VA as the secondary school and send me a copy of your *Enrollment Certification* for my records."

Ensure a transcript is obtained from the secondary school and that transfer credit is granted, grades permitting. When a compliance survey is conducted, your records will be reviewed to see if the course(s) applied to the student's program and to see if transfer credit was granted, grade permitting.

If You're the "Secondary" School

If a student takes courses at your school that will apply to a degree the student is pursuing elsewhere, you are the secondary school and the other school is the parent school. The student's parent school will send you a parent school letter. Transmit or mail an *Enrollment Certification* for the student as you would for any veteran student (remember tuition and fees, if appropriate), except:

1. Only certify course(s) listed in the parent school letter.
2. Enter "Supplemental enrollment, see remarks" for name of program.
3. Enter "NA" for Credit Allowed.
4. In remarks, write: "Supplemental enrollment. Parent school letter from *<insert name and facility code of parent school>* is on file. Student taking *<insert the course number, course title, and number of credits of each course you certified>*."

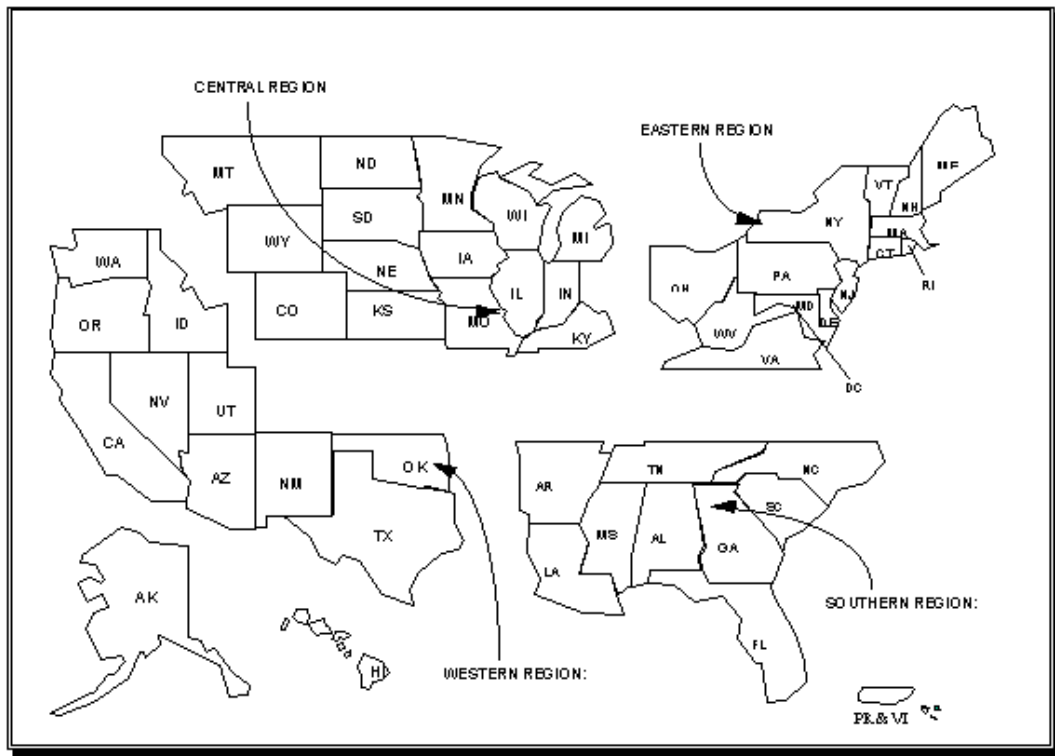
Secondary schools must **report all changes in enrollment** for secondary students. Transmit or mail a *Notice of Change in Student Status* to VA. Complete notices of change as you would for any veteran student, but in remarks include the statement, “Change in supplemental status. <Insert name of parent school> is parent school.” Keep copies of all secondary enrollment paperwork. As a courtesy, mail copies of secondary enrollment certifications and notices of change in student status to the parent school. Annotate the copy, “File copy FYI”.

Regional Processing

If the parent school is the Muskogee region, transmit or mail supplemental and concurrent enrollment certifications and notices of changes to Muskogee like you usually do. If the parent school is not in the Muskogee region, **mail** the supplemental and concurrent enrollment certifications and notices of change in student status to the parent school’s Regional Processing Office.

Central Region
VA Regional Office PO Box 66830 St. Louis, MO 63166-6830

Eastern Region
VA Regional Office PO Box 4616 Buffalo, NY 14240-4616



Western Region
VA Regional Office PO Box 8888 Muskogee, OK 74402-8888

Southern Region
VA Regional Office PO Box 54346 Atlanta, GA 30308-0346

**SAMPLE PARENT SCHOOL LETTER
(Suggested Format)**

NAME AND
ADDRESS OF PARENT SCHOOL

Date

NAME AND
ADDRESS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL

<Student's Name (Claim Number)> is a chapter <e.g., 30> student at <Name of School (facility code)> pursuing a <Name of Program, e.g. B.S. History degree>.

The course(s) listed below satisfy <Name of Program> requirements and will transfer at full value to <Name of School>.

List course(s) by title and number

Student intends to take the above course(s) at <Secondary School> <Identify term, e.g., spring term 2001>. Please certify the courses to VA as the secondary school and send me a copy of your Enrollment Certification for my records.

SIGNED BY THE CERTIFYING OFFICIAL
TELEPHONE NUMBER

NOTE: E-mail parent school letters are fine. The e-mail message simply needs to convey the facts outlined in the parent school instructions and a copy must be kept by the parent school in the student's file.

DUAL DEGREES AND DUAL MAJORS

A student may pursue a dual degree or dual major to accomplish a single objective. For example, a student might pursue a B.S. Business degree and a B.S. Computer Science degree to become an Information Resource Manager.

Dual degrees and dual majors must be approved by the SAA.

- If a dual degree or dual major is listed in your catalog or is pursued under an academic policy that defines the requirements for dual degrees or dual majors, then the dual degree or dual major may be certified to VA if the SAA has approved the dual degree or dual major, or the SAA has approved the policy under which the dual degree or dual major is pursued.
- If a dual degree or dual major is not listed in your catalog or is not defined by academic policy, then the dual degree or dual major must be approved by the SAA. This approval must be obtained even when the two separate degrees or two separate majors are approved by the SAA.

Different SAAs have different requirements, so check with your SAA about approval requirements. In general, however, a request for a dual degree or dual major approval should include:

- The name and claim number of the VA student for whom approval is requested.
- The exact title of the two degrees or the two majors for which approval is requested and the page numbers in the current, approved catalog where the degrees or majors can be found (e.g., B.S. Business and B.S. Computer Science).
- A description of the single career field to which the degrees or majors relate (e.g., Information Resource Manager).
- A three-part curriculum guide that lists the courses and credits required for the dual objective. Using the above example, the guide would list the courses and credits (1) unique to B.S. Business, (2) unique to B.S. Computer Science, and (3) common to both degrees. If approved, a copy of the curriculum guide must be given to the student and a copy must be kept in the student's VA file.

NOTE: The curriculum guide must reflect the minimum number of credits required to earn the dual objective. Free elective credit may not be included in the curriculum guide unless they are required to meet the minimum number of credit hours required to complete the dual objective.

- Using the curriculum guide, report the number of credits the veteran has already earned towards the dual objective and the number of credits the veteran must still complete. A responsible school official (e.g., Registrar or Degree Audit Specialist) must prepare the curriculum guide and complete the credit evaluation.

The approval request should be signed by the Certifying Official and by the responsible school official. Approval for the dual objective should be obtained from the SAA before certifying the student in the program. Identify the dual objective on the *Enrollment Certification* as it's approved by the SAA (e.g., B.S. Business & B.S. Computer Science). In remarks, enter "Dual objective approved by SAA. Approval in student's file."

DUAL MAJOR/DUAL DEGREE APPROVAL
(Suggested Format)

1. Student's Name: _____

2. VA Claim Number: _____

3. Name of dual degree or dual major (e.g., B.S. Business and B.S. Computer Science):

4. Found on pages _____ of current catalog.

5. Single career field to which this dual degree/major leads: _____

6. Credit hours already earned toward degree: _____

7. Total *additional* credit hours need to achieve dual objective: _____

8. Total credit hours required to achieve the dual objective: _____

Curriculum guide attached.

APPROVED BY

Department Chair or Dean: _____ Date: _____

School Certifying Official: _____ Date: _____

TUTORIAL ASSISTANCE

Tutorial assistance may be paid to students under chapters 30, 32, 35 and 1606. Tutorial assistance helps the student pay for necessary tutoring and is a supplement to the student's regular education benefit.

Overview

VA may pay tutorial assistance to a student receiving education benefits.

The monthly rate may not exceed the cost of tutoring or \$100. The maximum amount payable is \$1200. There is no entitlement charge for the first \$600 under chapters 30, 32, and 1606. There is no entitlement charge under chapter 35.

The student, tutor, and certifying official must complete an *Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance* (VA Form 22-1990t). The application may be submitted at the end of each month or combination of months. The application must be signed and dated on or after the date of the last tutoring session certified. VA can pay for tutorial assistance during the one year period before the date VA receives the application.

Eligibility

All of the following criterion must be met for a student to be eligible for tutorial assistance.

- The student must be in a post secondary program on a ½-time or more basis.
- The student must have a deficiency in a course that is part of his or her approved program.
- The student must be enrolled in a course during the same quarter in which tutoring is received for that course. Tutoring may not occur between quarters or semesters.

School Certification

When a certifying official signs an *Application and Enrollment Certification for Individualized Tutorial Assistance*, he or she certifies that:

- Tutoring is essential to correct a deficiency. A letter from the course instructor should be put in the student's VA file. The letter must state that the student is deficient in the course and that individual tutoring is required to correct the deficiency.
- The tutor meets the college's qualifications. Ideally, the school maintains a list of approved tutors. The list should indicate the subjects a tutor is qualified to tutor and the hourly charge. Students should be assigned a tutor from the approved list. A tutor may not be a close relative of the student.
- The charges do not exceed the usual charges for tutoring.
- The tutoring is given on an individual basis.

STANDARDS OF PROGRESS

General

Schools must have and enforce adequate standards of progress. The standards must be approved by the SAA.

1. The standards should clearly define when and under what conditions a lack of progress results in suspension or dismissal.
2. The standards should not allow an indefinite probationary period without improvement.
3. If a school's overall standards do not meet the requirements for approval, school officials may establish a different standard specifically for VA students. These standards will be used for reporting unsatisfactory progress to VA.
4. Progress standards must be in the school catalog or other appropriate documentation and they must define the following:
 - a) The school's grading system.
 - b) The minimum satisfactory grade level.
 - c) The grade level required for graduation.
 - d) The specific point at which progress is unsatisfactory and a student is subject to suspension or dismissal.
 - e) The probationary period, if any. Standards that allow a student to remain in a probationary status for more than two consecutive terms without defined improvement in academic standing do not meet minimum requirements for approval.
 - f) Conditions for dismissal due to unsatisfactory conduct.
 - g) Conditions for a student's reentrance following dismissal or suspension for either unsatisfactory progress or unsatisfactory conduct.

Appeal of Suspensions

It is not uncommon for schools to allow students to appeal suspensions to the academic dean or to an academic review committee. Such an appellate process must be equally available to all students. That a school allows a student to remain enrolled after successful appeal of an academic suspension does not make the standards unacceptable. In these cases the school must:

1. Report that the student was subject to suspension but allowed to remain enrolled by appeal.
2. Annotate the suspension on the student's transcript or other permanent record.

3. Send a *Notice of Change in Student Status* terminating the student effective the last day of the term in which progress was unsatisfactory.
4. Attach an *Enrollment Certification* with re-enrollment data.
 - a) If the student is re-enrolling in a program other than the one from which he was just terminated because of unsatisfactory progress, the school should include a statement on the *Enrollment Certification* that describes the conditions for the student's continued enrollment. The conditions must describe the minimum performance standards the student must achieve during a specified period of enrollment—for example, a 1.4 grade point average by the end of the first quarter, a 1.7 grade point average by the end of the second quarter, etc.
 - b) If the student is re-enrolling in the same program from which he was just terminated because of unsatisfactory progress, the school does not have to submit a statement of conditions for continued enrollment.

Progress Records

All schools must maintain progress records (e.g., academic transcript) that clearly illustrate a student's progress towards the completion of their program.

1. Courses organized on a term basis must have records which show the subjects taken each term and the grade assigned at the end of the term.
2. For courses not organized on a term basis, the school must establish standards that define a minimum proficiency level necessary for successful completion at given periods of time. The school must establish specific points within the course for evaluation of a student's progress toward completion.

COOPERATIVE TRAINING

Colleges and universities are increasingly offering work experience or work internship programs. The term **cooperative training** (co-op) is used by VA to denote school-sponsored programs that consist of school instruction and on-the-job (OJT) training. For example, a community college may offer an A.A.S. Automotive Technology degree with course work at the college and OJT at a car dealership. Like all programs, co-op programs must be specifically approved by the SAA.

Cooperative training, like some forms of practical training (see Practical Training, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560514 } and Training Time, page { PAGEREF _Ref453560534 }), can be certified by credit hours or by clock hours, whichever is to the student's advantage. Examples: A student takes 12 credits at the college one quarter and 6 credits OJT (40 clock hours) at a place of business the next quarter. The student is certified 12 credits the first quarter and 40 clock hours the second quarter. The student is full-time both quarters.

Co-op training may occur in two formats: alternating co-op or parallel co-op.

Alternating Co-op

The student alternates full-time school attendance with full-time OJT training. For example, a student may alternate one term of full-time school attendance with term of full-time OJT, or a student may take a 4 term of classroom instruction phase and then finish a program with a one term OJT phase (internship or externship). The school and the OJT phases must be full-time.

The school and OJT phases may alternate on a weekly, monthly, or term basis. However they alternate, the school phase must be at least as long as the OJT phase. If a school phase is certified for one month, then the subsequent OJT phase can not be more than one month. A school phase can be longer than an OJT phase, but an OJT phase can never be longer than the school phase.

Parallel Co-op

The student attends school half-time and works (OJT) half-time. For example, a student takes 6 classroom credits in the morning and 3 OJT credits (20 clock hours) in the afternoon. The combination of school and OJT must equal full-time. In this case, the student is full-time because the 6 classroom credits is 1/2-time and 20 clock hours is 1/2-time.

The school phase of training must be at least as long as the OJT phase of training. The student must be attending school at least half-time each day the student works OJT, but the student can't work more than 4 hours per day. A student could be attending school three-quarter time each day and working half-time or less, but not the other way around.

Rules for Cooperative Training

Cooperative training must be a **full-time** program. The school phase and the OJT phase together constitute one co-op cycle. The OJT phase must be an integral part of the school's approved program. The OJT must be supervised by school instructors, the school must arrange the OJT

phases with employers, the school must arrange for the placement of individual students in the OJT, and the school must grant credit for the OJT.

A VA student must elect co-op in writing. The best method is for the student to write an election statement in the “Remarks” block of the Enrollment Certification that the student signs and dates. With VaCert, the school should obtain a written election statement, keep the statement in the student’s school file, and enter in the 1999’s remarks, “Student’s written election for co-op training on file.” Once a student elects co-op training, the student must complete both phases (school and OJT) of each co-op cycle. If the student finishes the first phase, starts the second phase, and drops out; an overpayment may be created back to the beginning of the first phase, to the start of the cycle.

Although VA regulations require certain procedures and a specific minimum ratio of school and OJT, local and state requirements always take precedence and veterans are expected to follow the same rules and internal procedures as all other students. Sometimes this means a particular co-op program cannot be approved for veteran training because state or school rules conflict with VA regulation.

USEFUL INFORMATION

VA ON THE WEB

In addition to the VaCert for Windows web site (<http://www.vacert.net>), two other sites offer a wealth of information for certifying officials.

Education Service

The Education Service Home Page (<http://www.gibill.va.gov>) is a “One Stop” source for information. The site covers and links to everything of interest to veterans and certifying officials. Give the site’s address to your students. Among the menu items, you’ll find:

News has current information about changes in legislation, regulation, and policy that effect VA benefits. Check news on a regular basis and changes will never catch you by surprise.

Education Benefit Programs has general and detailed information about VA education benefits. “Detailed Information” links to on-line copies of the chapter 30, 32, 35, and 1606 education pamphlets. If a student wants a pamphlet, direct the student to this link.

Regulations and Policy has links to VA’s Education Procedures Manual (M22-4) and to Title 38 of the Code of Federal Regulations (38 CFR), the education regulations. M22-4 outlines the procedures VA follows to carry out the regulations in 38 CFR. Keep in mind that recent changes in the law aren’t incorporated into M22-4 or 38 CFR immediately. Look at News for information about recent changes in procedure or law.

School Officials contains the WAVES Handbook and the *AACARO Manual* on-line to view and to download (see Preface, page iii). The Muskogee RPO newsletter (*Western Region Round-UP*) published a couple times a year is also posted. If you need a *Designation of Certifying Official(s)* form, you can print one from this page.

Education Forms links to the Veterans Benefits Administration’s forms page. Several education forms can be downloaded and printed. The forms are in Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF). You need Adobe Acrobat Reader Version 3 or later to access the PDF files in your web browser. If you don’t have the Acrobat Reader installed, the link to download the program is on the forms page.

National Institute of Veterans' Education

The National Institute of Veterans’ Education is expanding and it provides useful information for certifying officials (<http://www.vba.va.gov/ro/central/stlou/index.htm>). Helpful content includes:

Basic Training (Basic Trng.) has an “Introductory Guide for Certifying Officials.”

Electronic Certification (Elec. Cert.) covers VaCert. If you’re using VaCert, read the “VaCert Maintenance, Updates, & Pointers” lesson. It contains useful information. For instance, if you haven’t already discovered the feature, you’ll find a section about archiving student records.

CONTACTING MUSKOGEE

The toll-free number for the Muskogee Customer Service Telephone Unit (aptly named the Dial Tones) is **1-888-442-4551**. The Customer Service Representatives are available 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central Standard Time, Monday through Friday. The 1-888-442-4551 system, however, is available 24 hours a day. The system's automated functions can provide information about benefits, applications, etc. Individual veterans can access their own record to obtain date of last benefit payment, check amounts, etc. Please utilize the automated system as much as possible. **NOTE:** You can bypass the automated system's message by hitting 1 and then 0 after the recording starts. 1 bypasses the recording and 0 transfers you to Muskogee.

In addition to the toll-free number, Muskogee has a separate toll number for certifying officials only, **(918) 687-2113**. The number has three lines. When the 888 system is deluged with calls (we receive 6,000 to 12,000 calls a week), the 2113 line may not be answered and it'll just ring. The 2113 line is long distance, so we don't connect it to our automated system to avoid phone charges. If the line isn't answered, try a little later or use the toll-free 888 number. Please don't give the 2113 number to your students.

When to call

Don't hesitate to call for:

- Non-receipt of benefits over 30 days from submission of enrollment certifications
- Non-receipt of Advance pay
- Notification of improper payment
- Overpayment clarification
- Hardship cases
- Problems resulting from DOD: kicker codes or Ch1606 eligibility

When you call 1-888-442-4551, always get the name of the person you talk to.

E-mail Inquiries

You can e-mail Muskogee (muskrpo@vba.va.gov) to resolve problems. If you do, be sure to provide the information needed to respond to the inquiry.

- Name of claimant
- Social Security Number or Claim Number
- Information reported on the 22-1999 or 22-1999b
- Provide tuition and fees if serviceperson or veteran <1/2-time
- Type in your question or your problem
- Your name, title, e-mail address, and the telephone number where you can be reached

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION OF VA STUDENT FOLDERS

We recommend the following format for VA student folders. This format isn't mandatory, but it does cover everything necessary for accurate certification. Contents should be in ***chronological order***. This order will make it more convenient for anyone working with the folder.

Left Side

- Copy of student's application for admission to the school.
- Copies of transcripts from all schools previously attended and your school's transfer evaluations.
- A summary grade report of the student's progress at your facility.
- Copies of degree plans for all certified objectives with all credit posted.
- Copy of remedial and deficiency test scores and justification for any remedial and deficiency courses certified to VA.
- Course substitution form(s).
- Course elective approval(s) when applicable.
- Copies of drop slips and withdrawal forms when applicable.
- Other school documentation.

Right Side

- Copies of VA Form 22-1990 or 22-5490 if available.
- Copies of VA Form 22-1995 or 22-5495 if available.
- Copies of all enrollment certifications (VAF 22-1999).
- Copies of all notices of changes in student status (VAF 22-1999b).
- Any correspondence from the Department of Veterans Affairs which you may have received for the student.

RETENTION OF VA RECORDS

VA students' records must be kept for 3 years following the ending date of the last period certified to VA. Records need to be kept longer than three years **only** if a written request to keep the records longer is received from the Department of Veterans Affairs or the General Accounting Office 30 or more days before the end of the 3-year period. This requirement is in the Code of Federal Regulations (38 CFR 21.4209(f)). **Note:** Although VA requires that records be kept for 3 years, record retention regulations for individual states may require that VA records be kept more than 3 years.



VaCert: *Too many records? Archive inactive students. Use a 3.5" floppy for an archive disk. From Registration, select the student, select files/archive, and follow the directions. Archived files can be restored. Simply insert your archive disk, open registration, and select file/archive. Again, follow the directions.*

VACERT

VaCert is a software program used to report enrollments and changes to VA electronically. Electronic transmission speeds processing for schools, VA, and, more importantly, students.

Downloading VaCert

VaCert for Windows can be downloaded from the VaCert Home Page (<http://www.vacert.net>). Download the single installation program (setupex.exe) as follows:

1. Select “Download VaCert” (left frame)
2. Select “VaCert for Windows v3.16.6 Download Web Sites” (right frame)
3. Select the “95,98,NT” icon (right frame)
4. Read the “Download Instructions” and then click “Enter”
5. Following the directions in the opening paragraph, select and download “VaCert For Windows v3.16.6” and “EtCert for Windows v4.0”. EtCert is the communications program for VaCert.

Before or after downloading VaCert and EtCert, contact your ELR (see ELR list, page { PAGEREF _Ref462715027 }) or a Muskogee VaCert Program Administrator (Jason Bishop, Donnie Sawyer, Michael Marks, and Terry Cahill at 918-687-2219 or musvacert@vba.va.gov) to get the password to open VaCert. Once you have the password, you can try out the program, but it won't be fully enabled and it won't transmit.

In order to fully enable VaCert, you must complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and you must get a Delta Update file (update.exe). If you haven't completed a MOU, you can view and download one from the “Welcome to Download VaCert” page that appears when you select “Download VaCert”. Send the completed MOU to your ELR with a request that he or she ask Muskogee to e-mail you an update file. The update file will be sent to you attached to an e-mail message that explains how to update VaCert. The update file will add your facility code(s) to VaCert and will fully enable the program.

Additional links on the “Welcome to Download VaCert” page discuss installation and explain why the Antarctica facility codes are in the program when you first install it. Review these links when you download the program.

ECAP

Electronic Certification Automated Program (ECAP) is a computer program that processes VaCert transmissions in VA's primary computer system, the Benefit Delivery Network (BDN).

ECAP can process enrollment certifications (1999s) and notices of change in student status (1999bs) through one, two, or all three of the steps involved in processing education claims. The first step is creating a Pending Issue File (PIF). A PIF is a record that shows VA received a claim. The second step, Generate and Display (GAD), proposes an award. The proposed award must be reviewed and authorized by a claims examiner. The third and final step, Claims Authorization

(CAUT), authorizes the award. How far ECAP processes a claim is determined by numerous variables (the logic written into the ECAP program).

ECAP can PIF, GAD, and CAUT chapter 30 1999s and 1999bs. ECAP can only PIF chapter 32, 35, and 1606 1999s. During the 4 months October 2000 through January 2001, Muskogee received 48,194 VaCert documents electronically. ECAP was able to:

- Process 92% of 34,380 chapter 30 1999s (Enrollments), 48% (16,364) through PIF, 30% (10,264) through GAD, and 14% (4,931) through CAUT. ECAP could not act on 8% (2,811) of the chapter 30 1999s.
- Process 86% of 20,350 chapter 30 1999bs (Changes), 67% (9,318) through PIF, 15% (2,072) through GAD, and 4% (482) through CAUT. ECAP could not act on 14% (1,947) of the chapter 30 1999bs.
- PIF 86% of 8,016 chapter 1606 1999s
- PIF 75% of 240 chapter 32 1999s
- PIF 74% of 4,729 chapter 35 1999s



VaCert: *ECAP can't work original claims at all. If a student has never applied, then the student does not have an education file. If an original application must be filed, don't "Add to Transmission" after you create the 1999. Instead, print two copies. Staple one copy to the original application and mail the application and the 1999 to Muskogee. Keep the second copy and a photocopy of the application in the student's file.*

ECAP also can't process beyond PIF if there are remarks. Don't enter anything in remarks that is not required or is not necessary. The current version of ECAP also can't work documents beyond PIF if there are overlapping terms, if there are more than three enrollment periods, or the program is NCD. The next version of ECAP will be a but more "robust".

TUITION ASSISTANCE

Tuition Assistance (TA) is a Department of Defense (DOD) program. TA is not administered by VA. TA rules vary by branch of service and can even vary between units depending on whether the unit is active, reserve, or National Guard.

If a student receives education benefits from VA and receives TA benefits from the military, duplication of benefits may be an issue. The issue might involve VA regulations, DOD regulations, or both; since VA and DOD both have regulations about receiving VA benefits and TA at the same time. Potential duplication issues are outlined below.

Chapter 30 Recipients

The Code of Federal Regulations states **active duty servicepersons** may not receive VA benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the military. If a serviceperson takes several courses, the serviceperson can't receive chapter 30 benefits for the same courses for which TA is paid. The serviceperson can receive chapter 30 benefits for the courses for which TA is not paid.

Chapter 30 “Top-Up”

Recent legislation created a new education benefit for active duty servicepersons, “Top-up” (or “Top-off”). Top-up pays in tandem with TA, but top-up is a VA benefit administered by VA.

Servicepersons eligible for chapter 30 and approved for TA are eligible for top-up. A serviceperson must have at least 2 years active duty to be eligible for chapter 30.

What is top-up? If TA doesn't pay the full cost of a course, top-up will pay the difference between what TA pays and the cost of the course. Duplication of benefits isn't an issue because the student is receiving top-up, not chapter 30. Servicepersons can receive TA and top-up. As noted above, however, they may not receive chapter 30 and TA for the same courses.

Top-up effects chapter 30 entitlement. Entitlement is reduced when top-up is paid. If chapter 30 paid a serviceperson \$650 full-time, then the serviceperson would be charged one month of entitlement for every \$650 in top-up. The entitlement charge is prorated. (If you're exasperated, it's OK to scream.)

The top-up benefit is available for any course that begins on or after October 30, 2000 and for which TA is paid. The serviceperson applies directly to VA for top-up. Servicepersons who haven't applied for chapter 30 before must submit an *Application for Education Benefits* (VAF 22-1990) to establish chapter 30 eligibility. A copy of the TA authorization form for the course signed by an authorized military official is required to process top-up.

Chapter 1606 Recipients

The Code of Federal Regulations states **active duty service members** may not receive VA benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the military. Some Active Guard Reserve

(AGR) members receiving chapter 1606 benefits are considered active duty. The active duty prohibition would apply to these AGR members.

The above paragraph describes VA's prohibition. Chapter 1606 and TA are DOD programs, processed by VA for DOD. Since chapter 1606 and TA are DOD controlled and funded, duplicate payment prohibitions for chapter 1606 and TA generally involve DOD, not VA regulations. DOD regulations ensure that chapter 1606 and TA aren't used to pay for the same courses.

Army National Guard and Air National Guard TA is complex because Guard TA may be **federal or state** funded. Most National Guard units use federal money for TA. When federal funding is used, some Guard units will ask students to get a letter from their school that says they're not receiving chapter 1606 benefits for the same credits for which they applied for TA. If you certified a student for 12 credits (full-time) and he or she is taking 16 credits, you can report 4 credits to the Guard as credits for which the student is not receiving VA benefits.

Some states have appropriated state money for TA for their National Guard units. When state funding is used for TA, duplication (subject to state regulations) is not an issue because the funding is not "federal" funding, the funding is not from two (duplicate) federal sources.

Reserve TA—Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, and Coast Guard Reserve—and chapter 1606 is always federal funding, so duplication is always an issue.

Chapter 32 Recipients

The Code of Federal Regulations states **active duty service members** may not receive VA benefits for the same courses for which they receive TA from the. The prohibition ensures that two federal funding sources—VA education benefit and military TA—aren't used for the same courses. The phrase "for the same courses" means an active duty service member could receive VA benefits for some courses and TA for other courses. If a student takes 16 credits, for example, the student could receive VA benefits for 12 credits and TA benefits for 4 credits.

Veterans eligible for chapters 32 education benefits may join the selective reserves—Army Reserve, Naval Reserve, Air Force Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve, Army National Guard, and Air National Guard—and receive TA through the reserves. Since a reservist is not on active duty, the active duty prohibition described above does not apply.

Certifying Students Receiving Tuition Assistance

Schools can't monitor what they don't know. Generally speaking, it's the student's responsibility to ensure there isn't a duplication of benefits. The *Application for Education Benefits* asks about TA (VAF 22-1990, question 16A) and the National Guard watches for duplicate payment. Schools should certify all courses that are part of a student's approved program unless the student asks you not to certify all the credit. Why would a student ask you to certify all his or her credit? Maybe the student wants to be paid ½-time rather than full-time to conserve entitlement, or maybe the student doesn't want you to certify courses for which he or she will receive TA.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

A veteran may be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation (chapter 31) benefits if he or she:

- Received, or will receive, a discharge under other than dishonorable conditions;
- Incurred or aggravated a service-connected disability which entitles him or her to VA disability compensation; and
- Is in need of vocational rehabilitation because his or her disability creates an employment handicap.

Vocational rehabilitation may be provided for up to 48 months. An eligible veteran generally has 12 years from the date he or she is notified of entitlement to VA compensation to use his or her chapter 31 benefits. VA may approve an extension of time and/or length of training in certain cases.

Entitlement for vocational rehabilitation services is determined on an individual basis following an evaluation of the veteran's interests, aptitudes, education, work experience, and vocational abilities. Each school is assigned a Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist to work with chapter 31 students and to assist school officials responsible for certifying chapter 31 students. Full tuition, fees, and books are paid by the VA to the school. In addition, the student gets a subsistence allowance depending on the training status.

CHAPTER 31 RATES				
	No Dependents	One Dependent	Two Dependents	Each Additional.
10/1/2000				
Full-time	\$433.06	\$537.19	\$633.04	\$46.14
3/4-time	\$325.41	\$403.49	\$473.29	\$35.48
1/2-time	\$217.73	\$269.77	\$317.11	\$23.67
10/1/1999				
Full-time	\$420.45	\$521.54	\$615.60	\$44.80
3/4-time	\$315.93	\$391.74	\$459.50	\$34.45
1/2-time	\$211.39	\$261.91	\$307.87	\$22.98

APPENDICES

ELRs AND SAAs

Education Liaison Officers

State Approving Agencies

Alaska

Terry Cahill
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
P O Box 8888
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888
(918) 687-2219

Alaska Commission on
Postsecondary Education
707 A Street, Suite 201
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3625
(907) 269-7973

Arizona

Lance Thompson
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
3225 N Central Ave, Rm 701
Phoenix, AZ 85012
(602) 640-4721/4722

Arizona Veterans Service Commission
3225 N. Central Ave., Room 910
Phoenix, Arizona 85012
(602) 255-5395

California

John Connolly
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
8810 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
(619) 400-5330

Bureau for Private Postsecondary
and Vocational Education
400 R Street - Suite 5000
Sacramento, California 95814
(916) 445-3428

Hawaii

Terry Cahill
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
P O Box 8888
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888
(918) 687-2219

State Postsecondary Education Commission
2444 Dole Street, Bachman Hall
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
(808) 956-6624

Idaho

Jay Aydelotte
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
805 W Franklin Street
Boise, ID 83702-5560
(208) 334-9554

Idaho Dept. of Education
State Approving Agency
PO Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0027
(208) 322-6977

Nevada

Donnie Sawyer
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
P O Box 8888
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888
(918) 687-2219

Commission of Postsecondary Education
Nevada Dept. of Education
1820 East Sahara Ave., Suite 111
Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
(702) 486-7330

New Mexico

Webster ("Bud") Propper
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
500 Gold Avenue SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 248-6726

New Mexico Veterans Approval Officer
PO Box 2324
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87503
(505) 827-6635

Education Liaison Officers

State Approving Agencies

Oklahoma

Donnie Sawyer
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
P O Box 8888
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888
(918) 687-2219

State Accrediting Agency
PO Box 53067
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73152
(405) 521-3807

Oregon

Robert Craig
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
1220 SW Third Avenue
Portland, OR 97204-2885
(503) 326-2494

Veterans Program Specialist
Office of Education Support Services
Oregon Department of Education
255 Capitol Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97310-0203
(503) 378-3600 x2672

Texas

Hampton Fox
Department of Veterans Affairs
Texas Educational Center (22)
701 Clay
Waco, TX 76799
(254) 299-9730

Texas Workforce Commission
Veterans Education
101 E. 15th Street, Room 342T
Austin, Texas 78778-0001
(512) 463-3168

Utah

Paula E. Terry
Veterans Affairs Regional Office
125 S State Street
PO Box 11500
Salt Lake City, UT 84147
(801) 524-3495

Utah State Board of Regents
#3 Triad Center, Suite 550
Salt Lake City, Utah 84180-1205
(801) 321-7133

Washington

Susan Clark
Veterans Affairs Regional Office (22)
915 Second Avenue
Seattle, WA 98174
(206) 220-6186

Nontransfer Associate Degrees & NCDs

Workforce Training & Education
Coordinating Board
128 10th Ave. SW
PO Box 43105
Olympia, Washington 98504-3105
(360) 586-8682

Associate Transfer Degrees & Baccalaureate and
Higher Degrees

Higher Education Coordinating Board
917 Lakeridge Way
PO Box 43430
Olympia, Washington 98504-3430
(360) 753-7866

FORMS AND APPLICATIONS

The first six forms listed below are the primary forms used by schools. Many VA Forms can be viewed and printed from <http://www.vba.va.gov/pubs/forms1.htm>. The forms marked with an asterisk * are online. The Designation of Certifying Officials (VAF 8794) and the Request Pertaining to Military Records (SF 180) are available online at the sites listed in their descriptions. Photocopy forms duplex (two-sided).

Benefit pamphlets can be read online at <http://www.gibill.va.gov/education/benefits.htm>

Select Detailed Information for the benefit pamphlet you want. Students can print sections they want.

VAF 22-1990 *	Application for VA Education Benefits. Application filed by a veteran who hasn't received education benefits in the past or who is applying for education benefits under a different VA education benefit. The application can be completed on the Internet, click the "Electronic Application Form" link on the menu at http://www.gibill.va.gov
VAF 22-1995 *	Request for Change of Program or Place of Training. Application filed by a veteran new to your school who has received benefits previously or who received benefits at your school and is changing his or her program of education.
VAF 22-5490 *	Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA). Application filed by a dependent who has not received DEA in the past.
VAF 22-5495 *	Request for Change of Program or Place of Training. Application filed by a dependent new to your school who received DEA in the past or who received benefits at your school and is changing his or her program of education.
VAF 22-1999	Enrollment Certification. Form filed by schools to certify a student's enrollment.
VAF 22-1999b	Notice of Change in Student Status. Form filed by schools to report a change in enrollment status that affects the payment of VA benefits.
VAF 21-4138 *	Statement in Support of Claim.
VAF 21-674 *	Request for approval of School Attendance.
VAF 21-686c *	Declaration of Marital Status of Dependents (Chapter 34/30).
VAF 22-1990t *	Application and Enrollment Certification for Tutorial Assistance.
VAF 22-8691 *	Application for Work-Study Allowance.
VAF 22-8794	Designation of Certifying Official(s). Available online at http://www.gibill.va.gov Select school officials from the menu and page down to education forms
VAF 22-8873 *	Supplemental Information for Change of Programs.
VAF 28-1900 *	Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation.
VAF 28-1905	Authorization of Entrance Reentrance into Rehabilitation and Certification of Status.
VAF 4-5281	Application for Refund of Education Contributions (Chapter 32).
SF 180	Request Pertaining to Military Records. Form used to request military records, including discharge certificates (DD 214). The form and information about military records is available online at http://www.nara.gov/regional/mpr.html

Getting More Forms

If you have a procedure for ordering forms from your local Regional Office that works well, continue to use that procedure. If you don't have a procedure or you're having problems getting forms, order forms from Muskogee using any of the following methods.

- Call Muskogee (888-442-4551 or 918-687-2113) and request forms through the telephone unit (Dial Tones).
- E-mail Muskogee at suplappl@vba.va.gov
- Mail request to:
VARO
Attn: Publications / 232
PO Box 8888
Muskogee, OK 74402-8888.

The request should list the forms and the number you want. It should also include your mailing address and your phone number. Please don't order more forms than you will use in 1 year.

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Accrediting Agency

A nationally recognized agency or association which the U.S. Secretary of Education determines to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered by an educational institution. The Secretary publishes a list of these agencies and associations which the state approving agencies utilize for establishing that a program of instruction may be approved under the provisions of 38 USC 3675 as an accredited program.

Active Duty

Full-time duty in the Armed Forces. This also includes full-time duty performed by commissioned officers of the Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (not including active duty for training).

Active Duty for Training (ACDUTRA)

Active duty for training in the Reserves or National Guard. This includes reservists on full-time duty for training purposes in the Armed Forces; members of the National Guard or Air National Guard of any state, performing full-time training duty under title 32, U.S. Code, sections 316, 502, 503, 504, or 505.

Advance Payment

The monetary allowance which may be payable to a student for the first fractional (or full) month and the following full month of enrollment. These payments are mailed to schools prior to the beginning of classes for release to students who have completed registration. (See Advance Payment, Page { PAGEREF_Ref512236149 })

Advertising

VA will not approve an enrollment in any course offered by an institution which uses advertising, sales, or enrollment practices which are erroneous, deceptive, or misleading by actual statement, omission, or intimation. Any institution approved for the enrollment of veterans and other eligible persons must maintain a complete record of all advertising, sales, or enrollment materials used during the preceding 12-month period.

Already Qualified

A student is considered “already qualified” if he or she has previously completed a program at the same level and in the same field of study for which application is now being made. This will not preclude the pursuit of a program leading to a degree at the same level with a different major or in an entirely different field. It also does not preclude the pursuit of subjects which may be necessary to qualify for admission into a program leading to a higher degree or to qualify for a vocational or professional objective. A person will be considered already qualified if he or she was previously employed in a job for which the course now being requested is designed to qualify the individual who completes it. For example, if the applicant is employed in sales, he or she is already qualified and not eligible for enrollment in a general sales course. VA benefits are not payable for pursuit of any program for which the student is already qualified. This includes courses required for relicensing or a continuation of licensing in a professional field.

Armed Forces

This includes the United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including the reserve components thereof.

Assignment of Benefits

Any arrangement by a school which denies the student the opportunity to control the proceeds of a check is prohibited. Section 5301(a) of title 38, U.S. Code, provides that payments of benefits due under the laws administered by VA shall not be assigned except as specifically authorized by law. There are no laws that authorize assignment of VA educational checks, either directly or indirectly.

Audited Course

The term means any credit course which a student attends as a listener only with a prior understanding between school officials and the student that such attendance will not result in credit being granted toward graduation. VA education benefits are not payable for pursuit of such courses. (See Audit, page { PAGEREF _Ref512215675 })

Award Letter

The official written notice from the Department of Veterans Affairs to a student of his or her monthly rate of payment, the inclusive dates of payment, and remaining entitlement at the end of the award period. **An award letter is sent to a VA student whenever VA awards or changes the student's education benefit.** The award letter is a good source of information for financial aid purposes.

Basic Educational Assistance

As used under the Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty, "basic educational assistance" means a monetary benefit payable to all individuals who meet basic requirements for eligibility under Chapter 30, title 38, U.S. Code, for pursuit of a program of education.

BDN

The Benefits Delivery Network (BDN) is composed of various components. It is VA's main processing system for all award and related actions. This system generates the payment information that is sent to the Treasury for producing the benefits checks. BDN also contains the master record files for veterans and beneficiaries. It was formerly known as the Target Delivery System

BIRLS

Beneficiary Identification and Records Locator Subsystem. This is a computerized record system directly accessed by regional offices by means of computer terminals. It contains basic identifying information on a VA claimant including the current location of the claimant's folder and service information.

Break in Service

The term "break in service" means a period of more than 90 days between the date when an individual is released from active duty or otherwise receives a complete separation from active duty service and the date he or she reenters on active duty.

Break Pay

Educational assistance benefits may be paid during the intervals between terms at a school or between terms when transferring from one school to another while remaining in the same program. Exceptions apply, as well as certain other restrictions in certain situations. **Persons on active duty or training at less than half-time are not entitled to interval payments.**

Certificate of Eligibility (C/E)

A Form 22-1993a which is issued to an applicant showing approval to pursue a stated program of education at a particular institution, the remaining entitlement of the student, and the ending date of the student's eligibility.

Certifying Official

The person at an institution who has been delegated authority to sign enrollment certifications, other certification documents and reports relating to VA benefits.

Certification of Delivery

Often referred to as the “COD,” Form 22-1999v is mailed to the school in a separate envelope from the advance payment check. When the advance payment check is given to the student by the school, the COD, which contains preprinted enrollment information, must be completed by the certifying official and immediately returned. Failure to do so will result in the student’s VA education benefits being suspended. (See Advance Payment, page { PAGEREF _Ref512236196 })

Change of Program

A change of program consists of a change in the educational, professional, or vocational objective for which the veteran or eligible person entered training and a like change in the type of courses required to attain a new objective. This includes any change in an eligible person's program or objective which will result in a material loss of credit or which will materially lengthen the training time necessary to complete an objective. A material loss of credit is generally considered to be the loss of more than 12 credit hours for programs measured in quarter or semester hours, or the loss of more than 10 per cent of the training completed for other types of courses. A change of program is **NOT** charged if a claimant **completes** one program, then changes to a totally different objective. (See Change of Program, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512215797 })

Change of School

There is no limit or restriction on change of schools for continued pursuit of the same course or program provided the veteran or eligible person is making satisfactory progress and there is no material loss of credit.

Character of Discharge

All VA benefits (with the exceptions of some insurance programs and certain medical benefits) payable to veterans or their dependents require that the particular period of service upon which entitlement is based be terminated under conditions other than dishonorable. However, a veteran must obtain an **“Honorable”** discharge to receive educational benefits under the Montgomery GI Bill, not “under honorable conditions” or “general,” which will disqualify the individual for those benefits. Service personnel who complete six months or less of active military service are issued “uncharacterized” discharges. If an “uncharacterized” discharge is used for reasons of service-connected disability or hardship, they are considered to be “Honorable” for Montgomery GI Bill purposes.

Circular

A publication issued by VA for distribution to regional offices and sometimes to schools as an expeditious way of providing directives on new procedures. A circular may also be used to disseminate information regarding issues which will be pertinent for only a limited period of time.

Claimant

An individual in the process of claiming VA benefits who is potentially eligible for benefits but who has not completed all the necessary steps which will permit VA to determine individual eligibility and entitlement.

Concurrent Enrollment

A student pursuing a degree at a school may take a course at another school because it's at a more convenient time, it's less expensive, or whatever. The school that will grant the degree is the student's parent school. All other schools are secondary schools. If the parent school will accept the secondary school's course as a transfer credit that applies towards completion of the student's degree, then both the parent school and the secondary school can certify the student to VA. The student may pursue courses at a secondary school at the same time, concurrent, or at a different time, supplemental. (See Supplemental and Concurrent Enrollments, Page { PAGeref _Ref512215976 })

Confirmed Enrollment

An enrollment certification which is dated, signed, and mailed by the school's certifying official on or after the first day of a certified enrollment period.

Course

As used in this Handbook, "course" means a specific class or subject of instruction (e.g., English 110).

DD Form 214

The Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty which is prepared at the time an individual completes a period of active duty in one of the Armed Forces. Former members of the Public Health Service (PHS) and of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) do not receive a DD Form 214, but they do receive comparable documents that provide necessary information concerning their active duty service. Veterans should be advised to submit copy number 4 of their DD Form 214 with a claim for VA benefits. A certified copy may also be submitted.

Delayed Enlistment Program (DEP)

A Delayed Enlistment or Delayed Entry Program allows individuals to contract to go on active duty in the Armed Forces at a later date. The periods of time of the delayed entry onto active duty vary according to the specific program involved. For example, under DEP, the delay of entry onto active duty varies up to 270 days. In other programs, such as ROTC, the delay may be several years.

Delimiting Date

The expiration date for education benefits. It is the first day after a claimant's period of eligibility expires. Benefits are not payable on or after the delimiting date. Generally, the delimiting date is ten years and one day from the veteran's last release from active duty date (RAD). The expiration date for those under Chapters 35 and 1606 is computed differently. (See Comparison of Education Programs, Delimiting Date, Page { PAGeref _Ref512216169 })

Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA)

Education benefits payable to eligible dependents or survivors of veterans. Commonly referred to as DEA or Chapter 35. (See Chapter 35, Page { PAGeref _Ref512216376 })

DOD Record

The Department of Veterans Affairs accesses the Department of Defense's manpower data base through a computer interface between the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) in Monterey,

California and the BDN System. This record contains information from the serviceperson's/veteran's military records which VA may use to determine eligibility for Chapters 30 and 1606.

Drop Period

A reasonably brief period of time at the beginning of a term officially designated by a school for dropping courses without **academic** penalty. The school's last day to drop a course will be the end of the drop period, providing it does not exceed 30 days from the first day of the term. (See Drops and Withdrawals, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512216454 })

Dual Eligibility

Entitlement to education benefits under two or more programs administered by VA. If an individual qualifies for educational assistance under two or more such programs, the total assistance available may not exceed 48 months, or the equivalent in part-time benefits. A person having dual eligibility may not receive such benefits concurrently.

Education Services Officer (ESO)

This includes civilian education services officers, military career counselors, and other employees of the military education offices who are assigned responsibility for advising servicepersons of the educational opportunities available to active duty personnel.

Educational Assistance

This term is generally used interchangeably with the term “education benefits.” However, under the Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty, the term “educational assistance” means basic educational assistance, supplemental educational assistance, and all additional amounts payable, commonly called “kickers.”

Eligible Person

A child, spouse, or surviving spouse of a veteran who served on active duty and who died on active duty, or who died of a service-connected disability, or who has a total disability permanent in nature resulting from a service-connected disability, or who died from any cause while a total and permanent service-connected disability was in existence. Also includes a child or a spouse of a person who is on active duty as a member of the Armed Forces and who now is, and, for a period of more than 90 days, has been, listed by the Secretary concerned as missing in action, captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.

ELR (Education Liaison Representative)

The person at the VA regional office responsible for the education liaison and program approval functions. The ELR is responsible for promptly informing state approving agencies, schools, and training establishments of changes in policies and procedures. (See list of ELRs and SAAs, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512216570 })

Enrollment Period

This term means an interval of time during which a veteran or eligible person is enrolled in an educational institution and is pursuing his or her program of education. This term applies to each unit course or subject in the veteran's or eligible person's program of education; i.e., quarter, semester, or full school year.

The number of months the student will be eligible for VA education benefits. This is usually expressed in the numbers of months and days the student will be eligible for full-time benefits, or the equivalent in part-time training, but also may be expressed in a dollar amount. Entitlement will vary depending on the education law the individual qualifies under. **In no event will entitlement exceed 48 months under any combination of laws.**

The numerical code assigned by VA to an institution specifically identifying it or one of its subdivisions.

A seven, eight or nine-digit number assigned by VA to identify a claimant's records. The Social Security Number (SSN) is the VA file number for most veterans. If a veteran was assigned an old seven or eight digit file number, the veteran's SSN will cross reference the seven or eight digit file number. VA assigns a letter suffix *to the veteran's file number* ("W", spouse or surviving spouse, "A", first child to apply, "B", second child to apply, "C" third child to apply, . . .) to identify the records of an individual eligible for chapter 35 benefits. A dependent's SSN **will not** cross reference a veteran's record. To access a dependent's record, the **file number of the veteran** must be provided.

An official General Educational Development certificate issued by a state-level department of education. The credentials issued by state-level departments of education are official documents that are acceptable as the equivalent of high school graduation diplomas. In addition, Department of Defense certificates of G.E.D. equivalency are acceptable evidence of completion of high school educational requirements.

The term “holiday vacation” means a customary, reasonable vacation period connected with a federal or state legal holiday which is identified as a holiday vacation in the educational institution's approved literature. Generally, VA interprets a reasonable period as not more than one calendar week at Christmas and one calendar week at New Year's and shorter periods of time in connection with other legal holidays.

A course or subject offered without any regularly scheduled, conventional classroom or laboratory sessions. For VA purposes, such courses or subjects must be accredited and lead to a standard college degree and consist of a prescribed program of study with provision for interaction either by mail, telephone, computer/Internet, or personally between the student and the regularly employed faculty of the university or college. A specific approval of these courses by the state approving agency is required, in order for VA benefits to be authorized.

A college, university, technical or business school, offering instruction at the postsecondary level which leads to an associate or higher degree. The institution must be empowered by the appropriate state education authority (under state law) or accredited by a recognized accrediting agency to grant such degrees. This designation also includes hospitals offering medical-dental internships or residencies without regard to whether the hospital grants a postsecondary degree.

Interval Payment (See Break Pay)**Kicker**

Additional money added to an individual's education fund by the Department of Defense to encourage enlistment or retention in the Armed Forces. The kicker is added to the individual's normal education benefit. Kickers are used for chapters 30 and 1606. (See Chapter 30 Kickers, Page { PAGEREF _Ref515337897 })

Matriculated Student

A college or university student who has satisfied all prerequisites for formal admission and recognition by the institution as a degree-seeking student. This does not mean that an undergraduate student must have formally been accepted into a specific major curricular field of study before he or she may be classified as "matriculated." (See Nonmatriculated Students, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512216694 })

MGIB

Refers to either the Montgomery GI Bill - Active Duty (Chapter 30 of title 38, U.S. Code) or the Montgomery GI Bill - Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606 of title 10, U.S. Code).

Mitigating Circumstances

Unanticipated and unavoidable events beyond a student's control which are responsible for the student's inability to complete a course or courses or which result in the student's receipt of a nonpunitive grade for a course that the student did complete. Generally, a student will be required to submit corroborative evidence to substantiate his or her reasons for being unable to complete the course(s) with a creditable grade(s). (See Mitigating Circumstances and 6-Credit Hour Exclusion, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512216766 })

NOBE

Members of the Selected Reserve are given a Notice of Basic Eligibility (DD Form 2384, commonly referred to as a NOBE, pronounced *no-be*) by their National Guard or Reserve unit stating they are eligibility for the Montgomery GI Bill—Selected Reserve (Chapter 1606). The NOBE use to be the primary document for verifying chapter 1606 eligibility. It is now a secondary document, only used to verify eligibility for 120 days after the date it's issued. The primary "document" for verify chapter is now a computer link between the Department of Defense (DOD) and VA, the chapter 1606 DOD Data Record. A copy of the NOBE does not "have" to be submitted to VA when a chapter 1606 student applies for benefits. Generally, a NOBE is only helpful when an original chapter 1606 application is submitted and when the NOBE was issued within the past 120 days. (See chapter 1606, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512218381 })

Non-College Degree (NCD)

The designation "NCD" is used to refer to a course or program of education or any other institutional vocational/educational training which does not lead to a standard college degree.

Nonpunitive Grade

A nonpunitive grade is a grade that (1) doesn't count as earned credit and that (2) isn't calculated into the grade point average. If a student completes the term and receives nonpunitive grades, the nonpunitive grades must be reported to VA if they change training time. An example of a nonpunitive grade is a "X" (no basis for grade), a "NP" (no pass), or a "U" (unsatisfactory) that doesn't count as earned credit and that isn't calculated into the student's grade point average.

Grades such as P (Pass) or S (Satisfactory) aren't calculated into a student's grade point average, **but** they are counted as earned credit for graduation requirements. Since they count as earned credit towards completion of the student's program, they aren't nonpunitive. (Nonpunitive grades are mentioned or discussed several time in Termination and Adjustment section, Page { PAGeref512218631 })

Nonstandard Term

A term which is of a shorter or longer length (i.e., weeks and days) than a standard quarter or semester. The number of instructor-student contact hours is increased proportionately each week to compensate for a shorter term length. VA will compute equivalent undergraduate credits to measure courses pursued during nonstandard terms. Terms of shorter than normal lengths are often referred to as **accelerated terms**. (See Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods, Page { PAGeref512218704 })

Objective

The final educational, professional, or vocational goal of a veteran, serviceperson, or eligible person (e.g., degree, diploma, certificate, occupation). An educational objective is one that leads to the awarding of a diploma, degree, or postdoctoral certificate which reflects educational attainment. Graduate certificate programs generally do not lead to an educational objective. A professional or vocational objective is one that leads to an occupation. It may include educational courses essential to prepare for the chosen occupation.

OLAF

On-Line Approval File. A VA computer program that lists information for approved schools and facilities nationwide.

Ordinary School Year

This is generally a period of 2 semesters or 3 quarters which is not less than 30 nor more than 39 weeks in total length.

Parent School

The parent school is the school that will grant the degree a student is pursuing. Generally, the student will be enrolled at the parent school for the majority of the program. (See Supplemental and Concurrent Enrollments, Page { PAGeref512218874 })

Program of Education

A combination of subjects, unit courses, or training activities pursued at a school or training establishment which is generally accepted as necessary to meet requirements for a predetermined educational, professional, or vocational objective (e.g., diploma, degree, certificate, occupation). An "approved program" is a course of study or program of training which the appropriate state approving agency has determined meets the legal requirements for payment of VA educational assistance benefits to veterans and other eligible persons.

Punitive Grade

A punitive grade is a grade that does not count as earned credit and that is calculated into the student's grade point average. Also see nonpunitive grade. (See Punitive Grades, Page { PAGeref512227483 })

Pursuit

The term “pursuit” means to work, while enrolled, toward the objective of a program of education. This work must be in accordance with approved institutional policy and regulations, and applicable criteria of title 38, United States Code; must be necessary to reach the program's objective; and must be accomplished through resident courses (including teacher training courses and similar courses which VA considers to be resident training), independent study courses, a graduate program of research in absentia, or medical/dental internships and residencies, nursing courses and other medical/dental specialty courses. VA considers a person who qualifies for payment during an interval between terms or school closing, or who qualifies for payment during a holiday vacation to be in pursuit of a program of education during the interval, school closing, or holiday vacation.

Quarter

A division of the academic year at institutions which operate on a quarter system calendar. Credits are earned and measured in quarter hours. A “standard quarter” is a period of instruction usually 10 to 13 weeks long.

Refresher Training

Refresher training is a course at the elementary or secondary level to review or update material previously covered in a course that has been satisfactorily completed. Under some education programs, the term also means training in a program of education in which the veteran is already qualified, provided that the program pursued is training to permit the veteran to update knowledge and skills and to be instructed in the technological advances which have occurred in the veteran's field of employment during the veteran's period of service. It may be used to update skills learned either during or prior to service but not for skills first acquired after discharge from service. Veterans pursuing “refresher training” are not limited to “refresher courses” at the elementary or secondary level.

Remedial/Deficiency Courses

These terms refer to noncredit training at the secondary level that is required for entrance to or preparatory to the successful pursuit of a postsecondary educational program. If secondary level training is needed for the student to reach a certain mastery level necessary for pursuit of a postsecondary program of education, the courses must be listed separately on the Enrollment Certification. Upon entrance each student's academic background should be evaluated and, as warranted, a required noncredit program established. These secondary level courses may include, for example, basic English skills, fundamental math, reading, or other special academic assistance necessary for the student to qualify for admission. These courses may also include noncredit secondary level training to overcome a handicap such as in speech and may be offered at a high school, college, or other educational institution. It is the institution's responsibility to determine if remedial/deficiency courses are necessary.

Reporting Fee

VA pays an annual reporting fee to schools. This fee is intended to help defray the cost of processing VA certifications. The annual reporting fee is based on the number of VA students, including chapter 31 (Vocational Rehabilitation), certified by the school during the calendar year. The fee is \$7 (\$11 if advance pay request was processed) for each student. The reporting fee is paid as soon as possible after the end of the calendar year.

REPS

Restored Entitlement Program for Survivors. Certain survivors of deceased veterans who died on active duty, or of service-connected causes incurred or aggravated prior to August 13, 1981, are eligible for benefits. The benefits are similar to the benefits for students and surviving spouses with children between ages 16 and 18 which were eliminated from the Social Security Act. The benefits are payable in addition to any other benefits to which the family may also be entitled. The amount of benefits is based on information from the Social Security Administration.

Research in Absentia

A certifying official of a school may certify a program of research pursued by a veteran or eligible person in absentia, when the research activity is necessary for the preparation of the student's master's thesis, doctoral dissertation, or a similar treatise which is a prerequisite to the degree being pursued. The research activity must be defined and organized so as to enable the certifying official to evaluate the time required for its successful pursuit, and the time certified for the research activity is independent of the time devoted to any employment situation in which the veteran or eligible person might be engaged.

SAA (See State Approving Agency)

Selected Reserve

The term means, with respect to the Armed Forces, the Army Reserve, the Naval Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve, the Air Force Reserve, the Coast Guard Reserve, the Army National Guard of the United States, and the Air National Guard of the United States. The Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration do not have Selected Reserve units.

Semester

A division of the academic year at institutions which operate on a semester system calendar. Credits are earned and measured in semester hours. A "standard semester" is a period of instruction usually 15 to 19 weeks long.

Serviceperson

An individual who is currently serving on active duty. Same as "servicemember."

Standard College Degree

The term means an associate or higher degree awarded by an institution of higher learning that is accredited as a collegiate institution by a recognized regional or national accrediting agency or an institution of higher learning that is a "candidate" for accreditation, or an institution which is accredited by an agency recognized to accredit specialized degree-level programs.

State Approving Agency (SAA)

An agency appointed by the Chief Executive of a state to approve institutional programs of education and training for payment of benefits under the various laws administered by VA.

Summer Session

A division of the summer term specifically designated in a school catalog as a distinct period of instruction. These sessions vary in length, and are often only 3-8 weeks long.

Summer Term

The total instruction offered by a school between the end of the Spring term and the beginning of the Fall term. A summer term may consist of several summer sessions. (See Summer Terms and Nonstandard Enrollment Periods, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512232036 })

Target

See **BDN**.

TIMS

The Image Management System (TIMS) is the scanning system used by Muskogee. All education paper work is scanned into TIMS. Paper is scanned manually. Electronic paperwork like a VaCert transmission file is electronically copied into TIMS.

Tuition and Fees

The term “tuition and fees” means the total cost for tuition and fees for a course which an educational institution charges to non-veterans whose circumstances are similar to veterans enrolled in the same course. “Tuition and fees” does **not** include the cost of supplies or books which the student is required to purchase at his or her own expense.

VaCert

Computer program used by schools to prepare enrollment certifications and notices of change in student status. The enrollment certifications and notices of change are transmitted to Muskogee by modem. They can also be printed and mailed. (See VaCert and ECAP, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512233133 })

VEAP

Veterans' Educational Assistance Program, Chapter 32. This is the contributory education benefits program for post-Vietnam era veterans. (See Chapter 32, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512307527 })

VAI (Veterans Assistance Inquiry)

A VAI is a specific procedure VA has for resolving problems questions about the amounts of VA education benefits, or the nonreceipt of education benefits after the anticipated claims processing time has elapsed. VAIs can be initiated by phone (1-888-442-4551) or by e-mail (muskcrpo@vba.va.gov). (See Contacting Muskogee, Page { PAGEREF _Ref512308483 })

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